

**CROSSING BORDERS AND BUILDING ALLIANCES: BORDER DISCOURSE
WITHIN LITERATURES AND RHETORICS OF COLOR**

A Dissertation

by

AYDE ENRIQUEZ-LOYA

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2012

Major Subject: English

Crossing Borders and Building Alliances:
Border Discourse within Literatures and Rhetorics of Color
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ABSTRACT

Crossing Borders and Building Alliances: Border Discourse within Literatures and
Rhetorics of Color. (August 2012)

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Building on Victor Villanueva and Malea Powell's research in rhetoric and writing, in my dissertation I assert that the hierarchical construction of knowledges within literatures and rhetorics has traditionally been utilized to oppress the bodies, histories, and voices of color within both disciplines. I ask that we interrogate the ways in which divisions between communities of color have been rhetorically instated and use the space created by these rifts to build alliances and communities.

Centralizing my discourse within Indigenous and Chicana feminist practices, in Chapter I, I define rhetorical borders and illustrate how we can create alliances and provide the methodology for engaging the underlying rhetorics within interdisciplinary works. Practicing this methodology, in Chapter II, I utilize trickster rhetorics in my reading of Wendy Rose's *The Halfbreed Chronicles* to illustrate how an alliance between rhetorics and literatures facilitates an alternate reading to emerge that defies a colonial gaze and to illustrate how this methodology could be applied to other texts. In

Chapter III, I juxtapose Leslie Marmon Silko's rhetorical storytelling structure exemplified in "A Geronimo Story" with Henry David Thoreau's "The Allegash and East Branch" to demonstrate how characters defy their hyperrealist constructions by enacting rhetorics of survivance to both protect people and knowledges and still have their stories heard. In Chapter IV, I argue that while initially the language barrier functions as a rhetorical border that defies history's colonial imposition in Tino Villanueva's *Crónica de Mis Años Peores*, he ultimately utilizes it to both recover his childhood, memory and history, and also to create alliances with other native Spanish speakers whose own experiences will facilitate the understanding of the language used. In Chapter V, I argue that the pedagogical implications of bringing together works of literatures and rhetorics into the writing classroom will dramatically impact students' relationship to writing, storytelling, and meaning-making.

My dissertation contributes significantly to both disciplines of Rhetoric & Composition and Literatures of Color by redefining the tools and rules by which we can engage a text. Additionally, my dissertation demonstrates that only through mutual use of rhetorical and literary approaches, through an interdisciplinary alliance, can we truly hear all stories.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Guadalupe Enriquez, who has always been my role model and my greatest source of support. Gracias Madrecita!

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The task of completing my PhD could not have been done without the continued support, ongoing encouragement, and help of so many individuals.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: DECOLONIZING THE ACADEMY: USING THE RHETORICAL BORDERS OF RHETORICS & LITERATURES OF COLOR TO BUILD ALLIANCES

Everyday	as the other
I'm reminded	brown face in the room
I'm not supposed to be here.	I cease to have
My words are not enough.	a name
My tears are not enough.	and
When people	I start to doubt my existence,
refuse to say	I'm reminded
my name	I'm not wanted here.
when I remind them	My words are never enough.
each and every day	My tears are never enough.
that	When my body stops responding
I'm not just	when my mind collapses within
a name	itself
I'm a person;	and my heart aches for
When people refuse to say	home
my name,	and my daughter calls for me
when I'm recognized	I'm reminded

I'm not supposed to be here.	I don't fade into the text.
But the words keep coming.	It is almost over.
But the tears keep coming.	Every day is a sacrifice.
I keep on writing.	Every day is a ceremony.
I keep on reading.	Every day I mourn
I keep on remembering.	and
I hear my mother's pride.	Every day I celebrate
I remember her sacrifice.	My words will be enough.
I see my daughter dance.	My tears will be enough.
I hear her laugh.	And I remind myself,
I don't run away.	This is where I belong.

Introduction

Within the academy multiple systems are in place and used to maintain a particular hierarchy of knowledge and history. At the top of this hierarchy stand primarily Western-derived knowledges, customs, philosophies, languages and histories. This is that which constitutes the makeup of the canon. At stake are the bodies, voices, minds, and narratives of countless groups. At stake is the future of the academy,¹ the academics of color, and, more importantly, millions of groups of color. Thus, in order to

¹My use of *academy* is in regards to the "site of institutionalized intellectual activity that is imagined to take place in the colleges and universities of the United States" (Powell 13). Additionally though, I imagine the *academy* as the site within which ideas are centralized, constructed and dispersed. I imagine the *academy* as an embodied institution that both reflects and projects racialized and sexist ideologies of society. I hold the *academy* and academics at large for the instructional education of its constituents. I therefore believe that to change the systemic racism and sexism that prevails, we must set the pace for change within the *academy*.

change the future, we must decolonize the academy. More specifically, we need to acknowledge and interrogate this preset hierarchy of Western knowledge and the rhetorical borders that have been instituted by racist and sexist ideologies; we need the academy to become a diverse body of knowledges and histories, and we need to build alliances between people of color—their bodies and voices—to ensure our mutual survival.

The bodies of knowledge within the contemporary academy and within which stories are told, retold, and re-imagined such as within rhetoric and literature are organized based on racialized hierarchies set up early on by individuals such as Kant, Hegel, and Freud.² Within these two fields, there is a strict canonical and colonial perspective that is taught. The works by people of color and/or those that challenge the status quo are tokenized and marginalized. Additionally, rhetoric and literature departments within the university are often separated. Too often an elitist discourse is engaged by the uninformed at the intersection between *R*hetoric and *L*iterature as to which is more valuable, never recognizing the pettiness of such an argument or the reasons for the divisions to begin with. In fact, there have been numerous scholars who critique the binaries of rhetoric/literature, rhetorics/poetics, and archive/repertoire because, as they assert, while these divisions may help “define and ensure the current scope of our profession, it does little to engage with the critiques or answer the calls of scholars of color (and other marginalized scholars) in the field” (Driskill 184-85).

² Linda Tuhiwai Smith notes that according to John Laffey, “the word ‘civilized’ became more defined with the help of Freud and more specialized in the way different disciplines employed the concept. One such use was comparative and allowed for comparisons between children and savages or children and women, for example” (66). Smith also notes that “Henry Louis Gates Jr. names Kant, Bacon, Hume, Jefferson, and Hegel as ‘great intellectual racialists’ who have been influential in defining the role of literature and its relationship to humanity” (66).

Essentially, the prolonged divisions between rhetoric and literature keep scholars of color within both disciplines from building alliances and challenging the field. There are voices within each that have been continually silenced, erased, and denied by the same colonial force of the academy. The mutual recognition of oppression of said voices within each field is necessary, so that these become not one set of oppressed voices but rather a united front of bodies. I am, ultimately, calling all academics of color and our allies from literature and rhetoric programs and departments to join forces, to unite, to create an alliance, and to push the academy to change. We must meet in the center, in the hallways, in the third space, and on the bridges we can build between the borders that have been created to separate us. I call us as academics to decolonize rhetoric and literature as disciplines that have for too long oppressed voices of color, maintained control as to what constitutes valuable knowledge, and too often have been complacent with the marginalization of people of color and the knowledges we can build. I call us as scholars to engage a new language that, by the same token, interrogates rhetorical borders and divisions, and also has the rhetorical capacity to heal, build alliances, and create communities.

Colonizing Institutions

As an academic I recognize that in order to change the educational system, we must change the institutions that educate future decision makers, board members, teachers, and parents. As an academic, I must recognize that my place within the ivory tower is a place of privilege. As a woman of color and as a scholar of color, I am doubly responsible to assist in changing the system in a colonizing institution and in the ways in

which I can support communities of color by recognizing and addressing the problems within the space in which I am trained. The American academy, as it stands, still eerily perpetuates the racialized and sexist ideologies of early European American colonists.

In *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Linda Tuhiwai Smith states that:

Although colonial universities saw themselves as being part of an international community and inheritors of a legacy of Western knowledge, they were also part of the historical process of imperialism. They were established as an essential part of the colonizing process, a bastion of civilization and a sign that a colony and its settlers had ‘grown up.’ Attempts to ‘indigenize’ colonial academic institutions and/or individual disciplines within them have been fraught with major struggles over what counts as knowledge, as language, as literature, as curriculum and as the role of intellectuals, and over the critical function of the concept of academic freedom. (65)

As Smith indicates, the academy is a byproduct and/or after effect of colonial universities. The academy is still richly embedded with the same training and indoctrination practices of early colonizers. In its hierarchical categorization of what constitutes valuable knowledge and other valid ways of knowing as almost exclusively defined by Western/colonial modes of thought, the academy is complacent with the systemic oppression of “alternative” knowledges from colonized peoples. This kind of methodology is implicit in the ways in which canons are derived and knowledges are valued. For example, in Chapter III “American Indian Rhetorics of Silence and Recovery: Enacting Rhetorics of Survivance in 19th Century European American

Literature” I confront the ways in which early travel writings facilitated the perceived notion of a superior colonial gaze over the land. In this chapter, I argue that Henry David Thoreau’s excursion and journal entries within *The Maine Woods* provide a model for the construction of texts that become acts of domination³ in their colonial entrapments and desire of cleared spaces for European Americans. Thoreau’s journal entries epitomize the capacity of a text to begin to take over as it begins to take record of the land, history, and bodies within these “new world” spaces. This is the type of foundation that epitomizes the problems with the unchallenged hierarchical construction of knowledge within academia.

And because our training within the academy is built upon a Western foundation, we have to acknowledge that our writing has the capacity to inflict harm upon communities of color, and we also have to be aware of the limited language and/or tools we are given to challenge this system. As Audre Lorde reminds us, while using these limited tools within academia we may temporarily gain agency, ultimately “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house” (“The Master’s Tools...” 98). Essentially, using these same tools within the same prescribed rules will never bring about true and permanent change to the academic system as a whole. In order to change the systemic oppression of people of color, both those we write about and those we work with, we need to find the ways in which we can retool the methodological and disciplinary use of language within academia. A viable and effective option lies in the languages we can use—in the tools we are given to change the system. Essentially, in order to decolonize the academy, we must be strategic in our rhetorical use of language

³“Acts of domination” is from James H. Cox’s text and will be further discussed in Chapter III.

and our approach to social justice. If we must work within the confines of a methodological set of rules governing the use of language, a set of tools that allow us to engage the necessary discourse and rhetoric of social justice, then we must change the rules by which this equipment operates.

The fact is the American academy is a colonizing institution. But within this colonizing space of academia, there are a substantial number of scholars determined to alter the effect the academy has on people of color— both within the works we read and the people we work with—and the research that informs us about our relationship and mutual responsibilities to communities of color. I count myself as working alongside these scholars. As the work of Gloria Anzaldúa, Audre Lorde, Ralph Ellison, Louise Erdrich, Emma Pérez, Malea Powell, Victor Villanueva and Linda Tuhiwai Smith among so many others working within interdisciplinary boundaries establish, we need to create a new methodology of the use of language that engages the full capacity of the rhetorics employed. We need to speak from a space that utilizes these interdisciplinary strategies, and we need to do so with the tools we are provided within academia. As such, we need to change the pattern, change the rules that govern how we can use language, and change our allegiance from colonizing research practices to those that acknowledge the multiple histories and bodies that have been silenced and marginalized by the rhetorical borders. Furthermore, we need to interrogate the source of these divisions, the multiple rhetorical divisions and borders that have created hierarchical constructions of knowledges and have displaced bodies, voices, and scholars of color.

By interrogating the sources for the rhetorical borders that are racially and sexually built around bodies, stories and knowledges of color, we as scholars of color

and our allies are able to build interdisciplinary and cross-cultural alliances. Within the space of alliance, within the space of the borderlands, and the decolonial imaginary, we have the capacity to enact multiple forms of rhetorics that challenge the colonial gaze and colonial imposition upon works by people of color. Using these rhetorics, we take control of the language and of the tools provided within academia—the master’s tools. By using these rhetorics and approaching works of color from a space interrogating the continued colonial practices in our research methodologies, we are able to tell a new story. It is within this story that we begin to come together in alliance and in community to begin the task of not only interrogating and challenging academia but ultimately decolonizing the American academy.

It is from this framework that James Thomas Stevens in “The Alphabet of Letters” interrogates the construction of the alphabet as a means by which colonizers control bodies, histories and spaces. He starts the poem by stating:

The Alphabet out of Order.

B R C D G X T L Z N V Y I J M W H K E F A U S O Q P

It will never be the same.

The alphabet out of order,

your tongue

in mandate direction. ...

Have you learned it yet? (85)

This brief passage makes a couple of interesting arguments. As children or even as adults learning a new language, especially English, many times we are forced to first learn the alphabet. The standardization of the alphabet, even the ABC song children

learn in preschool, is the initiation of a pattern of education that is to follow. We never begin learning the alphabet with the letter “M” or any other letter besides “A.” It is a preset pattern designed as a way to control information and control knowledges.

Additionally, if we look at the ABC pattern of education, we can see how such an internalization of information can lead to the construction of other structures such as the ways in which history is told, people are categorized, and time is seen chronologically. It is all a pattern. If, however, we rearrange the alphabet, as Stevens illustrates in this poem, then what we have is a whole different pattern and the capacity to tell a whole different story.

Additionally, as Stevens goes on to explain: “Let me teach you the new word for *you*. Let us teach them the new word for *themselves*” (85), he taps into the dangerous binaries set up early on by history and by figures such as Hegel and Kant.⁴ If we are consistently thinking in terms of “Us” and “Them,” we leave no space for the building of communities. Essentially, Stevens asserts that the divisions among people are largely a reflection of the categorization of knowledges and knowledge bases. As such, his poem is a call to action. A call to disrupt the way we categorize knowledges and peoples. It is

⁴ The historians and even philosophers that I’m referring to here were trained by iconic Western figures and works such as G.W.F. Hegel’s *The Philosophy of History* and Emmanuel Kant *Race and Enlightenment*. Hegel and Kant took it upon themselves to both theorize and document their classifications and understandings of the record keeping, humanity, and the role of the individual within history. For example, in Hegel’s *The Philosophy of History*, he explains that when historians are to cover a long period of time, they must take liberties in their renditions and omit over anything or anyone that could be a potential distraction (48). Additionally, it is within his precept that historians are able to provide a universalizing history that the construction of history creates detrimental categorizations and definitions of Others (Hegel 17).

Kant’s work in *Race and the Enlightenment*, for example, not only begins to create a hierarchy of races but it also confirms and encourages some of the basic precepts that led to the genocidal attempts on Indigenous peoples and the enslavement of African peoples. Kant categorizes the races into the following areas: First race, very blond (northern Europe), of damp cold; Second race, copper-red (America), of dry cold; Third race, black (Senegambia), of dry heat; Fourth race, olive-yellow (Indians), of dry heat. Within Kant’s constructions of race and classifications of what constitutes a higher order of humanity begins then the inferiority of all people of color (63).

a call that allows us to imagine the possibility of understanding our world on completely different patterns. This disruption of patterns is precisely the idea that Thomas King questions his readers about in *The Truth About Stories*: “Do the stories we tell reflect the world as it truly is, or do we simply start off with the wrong story?” (26). If the construction/categorization/pattern of knowledges on a hierarchical scale is disrupted, if the “A” in the alphabet no longer assumes the authority bestowed upon it exclusively based on its placement, then we can begin to tell the stories that actually reflect our world. If we create a new pattern, we have the potential to create a whole “new” set of rules for how we use language and therefore a new story emerges. With this new knowledge, then perhaps as a society we must learn to communicate with each other, identify ourselves in ways that we are no longer separated by the “us/them” binaries. Perhaps we can exist in the “/” and use this space to build alliances.

It is our insistence to exist within the “/”, in the spaces that defy binaries and reconstruct how and when we are able to relate our stories that open the discussion for new stories. For example, Chapter IV, “Rhetorics of Translation and Survivance: The Ethical Translation of Stories, Lands, and Bodies in the Chicano Poetry of Tino Villanueva” asserts that a rift is created in the space between a text and the imposition of a translation/interpretation of a text—a rift that weaves together a new story from the blending of discordant and concordant voices, languages, bodies, lands, and stories. And it is precisely this rift that we are able to use language, re-tool and redefine language to fit our needs, and to defy the boundaries and binaries that seek to control the story and the bodies within the story.

Our existence outside of binaries within new languages, knowledges, and/or even

patterns of information indoctrination can help us create communities and build alliances upon a mutual respect and recognition of the multiple epistemologies that we can bring within this space. In fact, Malea Powell in “Down by the River” explains:

We need a new language, one that doesn’t convince us of our unutterable and ongoing differences, one that doesn’t force us to see one another as competitors. We need a language that allows us to imagine respectful and reciprocal relations that acknowledge the degree to which we need one another (have needed one another) in order to survive and flourish (41).

The rearrangement of information such as in Stevens’ poem illustrates that in order to begin to respect and honor others’ beliefs, we need to do away with hierarchies of information. Because it is not simply about the inclusion of information or knowledges but rather it is about coexistence and mutual respect. Stevens’ poem embodies both the notion that there is in fact a hierarchy of knowledge and that in order to destroy the hierarchy, you must destroy the order. Our analysis, therefore, of our divisions and in order to enact an alliance is embedded within language, within the order/pattern of language, and within the rhetorical use of it.

Rhetorical Borders & Alliances

The divisions between communities are constructed by language itself, by rhetorical borders. Our interrogation of the core of these rhetorical borders shows that these spaces are the foundation to not only build alliances but to build communities. Rhetorical borders are the divisions created by language we use to both create and understand the world around us. Rhetorical borders—borders created and/or invoked by

language, history, and experience—have the capacity to engage similar spaces as the physical land divisions on a theoretical level. At the core of our understanding of rhetorical borders, lay the historical actors on whose lands and bodies these said borders are imposed. Gloria Anzaldúa, in *Borderlands/La Frontera*, writes that a border is “a dividing line...a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary” (25). The idea Anzaldúa presents here is that borders are not innate to societies or individuals. For her, borders are imposed upon bodies and lands. The “emotional residue” of the displacement, the dispossession, the censure, the erasure and the denial all are embodied by this space.⁵ The border thus becomes a space not for the victims of colonialism but for the survivors. And according to Anzaldúa, those who live within this space are *los atravesados* (*the crossers* or rather *those who have crossed*). This space, the border itself, within which *los atravesados* exist and remain, is as much a third space⁶ as it is an enclosed space. Closed off from both sides and existing within a space of indeterminacy, *los atravesados*, those who have crossed, the people, me, you, us, thus remain.

In her poem “To Live in the Borderlands Means You,” Anzaldúa further elucidates the indeterminacy of this space. She says:

In the Borderlands

you are the battleground

where enemies are kin to each other;

you are at home, a stranger,

⁵ My use of “space” blends and interrogates the relationship between communities, history, politics, and locality, while my use of “place” is more demonstrative of a specific location that although it will always be informed by cultures it attempts to deny its relational capacity.

⁶ My use of “third space” is in reference to Emma Perez’s “third space” presented in *The Decolonial Imaginary* and will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

the border disputes have been settled
 the volley of shots have shattered the truce
 you are wounded, lost in action
 dead, fighting back (216).

Here Anzaldúa explains that the borderlands are not only contested space, but a space where everything that has happened and everything that is happening is all taking place at the same time. Time certainly does not stand still in this space, but appears to have little effect. Essentially, the collision of time and space within the borderlands allow multiple histories to interact, where the pre-colonial, colonial, and ongoing history of this space speak back and forth to one another and have the capacity to create a new story as a result. This is not a linear time frame but an understanding of time where the rupture of this space by the very imposition of this border weaves together the multiple histories into a new tapestry, a new story. This interesting convergence of history, people, land, and time is what constitutes this space. Within this space, we embody the history of the land, the people, and the conflict while also carrying the historical weight of these violent events on our backs. Anzaldúa concludes this poem with: “To survive the Borderlands / you must live *sin fronteras* / be a crossroads” (40-2). If within this space, we carry the weight of history, then to survive in this space, we must break down borders. In other words, time cannot change or erase the history written with the blood of so many people on this land. Time observes but does not organize the events. It cannot. Furthermore, we must be “a crossroads” (42), which suggests that we must find the way to cross and also carry the weight of our people on our backs so that future generations will survive and the land and the people will begin to heal.

This space is what Emma Pérez argues becomes the decolonial imaginary. She says that the decolonial imaginary is “a rupturing space, the alternative to that which is written in history [and] ... That interstitial space where differential politics and social dilemmas are negotiated” (Pérez 6). That place of conflict where borderlands become the rupturing space of interrogation and renunciation, are spaces that by their very resistance to the oppressive colonial forces become windows where freedom, sovereignty, survival, and confrontation pave the way to healing. Pérez explains that “through the decolonial imaginary, the silent gain their agency... [And] [t]hird space feminism, then, becomes the practice that implements the decolonial imaginary” (33). Third space feminisms are the spaces within which a dialectic emerges that contradicts and challenges dominant male discourses (Pérez 32). And it is precisely within this dialectic that we can build alliances and communities. It is within this space of the decolonial imaginary that as scholars we are able to not only interrogate the colonial presence within academia but we are also able to renounce it. Through this rhetorical space and understanding that we can utilize to hear voices of color that have been marginalized by a colonial history and by colonizing practices still embedded within academia. This practice is not simply reading the text through a different lens, but reading the text through a kaleidoscope lens. Seeing and unseeing the patterns, shifting the patterns, and controlling the patterns of the language used to construct the text. Our language must then engage a kaleidoscope of perspectives, and we must learn to control the language rather than be controlled by it.

This ability to control both how we use language and the lens by which we choose to define language is precisely where Chapter II steps in. In this chapter

“Reclaiming Bodies, Spaces, and History: Trickster Rhetorics in Wendy Rose’s *The Halfbreed Chronicles*,” I argue that by defying the rules on how she is allowed to tell a story, Rose asserts a masterful control over the text and language; she demonstrates that the authority of a storyteller exceeds the boundaries of the written word and that the needed alliances must be cross-cultural and interdisciplinary. Ultimately, utilizing trickster and mixed-blood rhetorics Rose redefines the rules by which she tells her story, builds alliances among peoples of color, and enacts acts of survivance.

Furthermore, within this space of the decolonial imaginary, within the rift created by the conflict of borders, where we are able to negotiate histories, we can enact rhetorics that defy colonial history and that allow us to engage a new discourse. Anzaldúa says that she participates in “the creation of yet another culture, a new story to explain the world and our participation in it, a new value system with images and symbols that connect us to each other and to the planet” (103). By approaching rhetorics and poetics within this space of the Borderlands and the decolonial imaginary, and through this practice of interrogation and negotiation, we enact Anzaldúa’s call to create “a new story to explain the world and our participation in it” (103). By approaching works of literature rhetorically, we can recognize that works by people of color, in particular, have been engaging these interdisciplinary politics for some time now. As scholars, we must recognize the rhetorical strategies engaged in these texts. The division between rhetoric and literature is a rhetorical border. We must pave the way for this alliance to be enacted.

The indeterminacy of this space, however, is not exclusive to the relationship between land and nation, but is also rather indicative of the multiple and complex

borders we inhabit as humans: the physical, the spatial, the gendered, the psychological, i.e. the rhetorical borders. Furthermore, because these dividing lines are unnaturally created and imposed upon us, we are thereby constrained and restricted to this third space by the sheer rhetorical creation and even invocation of borders. As individuals and as members of communities, the space we inhabit is largely determined by our race, gender, sexuality, religion, and class. Additionally, the spaces we are prohibited from are determined by a society's perception of who we are and who we are supposed to be. We are thus forced into a third space because of where we are from, the color of our skin, how we choose to define and live our lives, and how we respond to verbal and physical attacks from beyond the margins. Audre Lorde's work in *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*, in particular, speaks to this indeterminacy. She writes:

Most Black lesbians were closeted, correctly recognizing the Black community's lack of interest in our position, as well as the many more immediate threats to our survival as Black people in a racist society. It was hard enough to be Black, to be Black and female, to be Black, female, and gay. To be Black, female, gay, and out of the closet in a white environment, even to the extent of dancing in the Bagatelle, was considered by many Black lesbians to be simply suicidal. And if you were fool enough to do it, you'd better come on so tough that nobody messed with you. (Lorde 224)

In this brief excerpt, Lorde confronts the multiple borders she is forced to live with. The majority of these borders are externally imposed, but they have been ingrained so deeply that they are internalized. In the end, Lorde is fighting on multiple fronts as a Black

person, as a Black woman, as a woman, as a lesbian, as a lesbian in a white space, as a Black lesbian in a white space. The combinations can go on forever. But what is important to recognize is that out of the imposition of these said externalized rhetorical borders, Lorde explains that the individual is forced to create another border. In this case, she uses a tough attitude to protect herself, as she explains above. More specifically, Lorde asserts a recognition of a self imposed border as a response of the external constraints upon her identity. She recognizes that to be an openly Black lesbian in a white space forces her to live within multiple borders. But if we consider our previous discussion of Anzaldúa and her explanations of the borderlands, we can argue that Lorde's discussion of these multiple borders is the idea of the continued conflict on the land that becomes and/or represents the internal/external violence/chaos upon her body. She is both fighting within herself and with everyone else. And, in order to function as the crossroad herself/ourselves, she/we must recognize the root of these divisions and the role that they play within our minds, bodies, and society at large.

As such, my understanding of these rhetorical borders and alliances builds on Anzaldúa's new mestiza consciousness. In *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Anzaldúa explains that when we exist closed off from both sides and when we shut down the discourse and insist on maintaining an "us/them" distinction and dichotomy, we have a problem. She says, "a counter stance locks one into a duel of oppressor and oppressed. Locked in mortal combat, like a cop and criminal, both are reduced to a common denominator of violence" (Anzaldúa 100). Instead, Anzaldúa argues that the very walls and borders that separate us are the problems and suggests a shift to a new way of understanding the world we live in through what she terms the new mestiza: "*La mestiza* constantly has to

shift out of habitual formations; from convergent thinking, analytical reasoning that tends to use rationality to move toward a single goal (a Western mode), to divergent thinking, characterized by movement away from set patterns and goals and toward a more whole perspective, one that includes rather than excludes” (Anzaldúa 101).

Anzaldúa explains that the goal is not to arrive at only one exclusive way of thinking about the world, but to create a more unified understanding that brings together multiple perspectives. This multiplicity is not a call for multiculturalism but for pluralism⁷ (Anzaldúa 101). As such, instead of living in a perpetual counter stance that thrives on violence, Anzaldúa posits a new mestiza consciousness that breaks down paradigms and ask us to straddle multiple cultures and live without borders (102).

Our use of a new mestiza consciousness is the process by which we can both interrogate the source of divisions and also embody the space to create alliances and build communities. She says, “By creating a new mythos—that is, a change in the way we perceive reality, the way we see ourselves, and the ways we behave—la mestiza creates a new consciousness” (Anzaldúa 102). And in doing so, Anzaldúa asserts that we engage “healing the split that originates in the very foundation of our lives, our culture, our languages, and our thoughts. A massive uprooting of dualistic thinking in the individual and collective consciousness is the beginning of a long struggle, but one that could, in our best hopes, bring us to the end of rape, of violence, of war” (102). It is within this space that epistemologies collide. It is within this place of conflict, where cultures and systems of knowing come together and breed hope for alternative

⁷ “On the Rhetoric and Precedents of Racism,” Victor Villanueva, among other scholars, challenges the role of a multiculturalism and its capacity to stabilize racial inequalities (653).

expectations about the world we live in and our role within it. It is within this space that we can begin to build alliances and communities.

Additionally, this call for the active interrogation and challenge to rhetorical borders and the building of alliances is exemplified in various literary works engaging these rhetorical strategies such as Louise Erdrich's "Dear John Wayne," Audre Lorde's "A Litany for Survival," and Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*. It is significant that these authors engage these rhetorics because it is demonstrative of the large body of work not only heeding this call to action but also leading the way. In Erdrich's poem, for example, she writes:

August and the drive-in picture is packed.
 We lounge on the hood of the Pontiac
 surrounded by the slow-burning spirals they sell
 at the window, to vanquish the hordes of mosquitoes.
 Nothing works. They break through the smoke screen for blood.
 Always the lookout spots the Indian first,
 spread north to south, barring progress.
 The Sioux or some other Plains bunch
 in spectacular columns, ICBM missiles,
 feathers bristling in the meaningful sunset.
 The drum breaks. There will be no parlance.
 Only the arrows whining, a death-cloud of nerves
 swarming down on the settlers
 who die beautifully, tumbling like dust weeds

into the history that brought us all here
together (93).

Throughout this poem, there is a continuous shift that appears as a slippage between what is going on in the text, in the John Wayne film, and popular culture, and how Erdrich is connecting and weaving everything together to tell her story. Similar to Anzaldúa's use of time, here, too, everything is so intricately woven that the reader has to stop and question where this is taking place and/or if it is really taking place. As such, Erdrich challenges what constitutes the reality and even challenges who is allowed to decide what is real and not.⁸ By layering narrative upon narrative, Erdrich recreates the spaces inhabited by *los atravesados* in the borderlands. As such we are in a position where the characters recognize themselves in the film and within the colonial history. They recognize that the violence exhibited in the film as the result of living in a perpetual counter stance and that their role then must not be to wage war but to be the space from which communities can come together rather than be driven apart. And while this space for interrogation is very much real, Erdrich's use of Hollywood and the film industry is suggestive of the shift in recognizing our own creation of reality and capacity for re-creation/recapitulation of a colonial gaze on the narratives. Erdrich challenges not only the canonization of colonial histories within academia and popular culture, but also challenges our complacency with it all.

While Erdrich's approach is to challenge the rhetorical borders that we enact and

⁸ In *Narrative Chance* Gerald Vizenor explains that within the European American mindset, all the "real Indians" are long gone. And the story of the "Indian" becomes a part of the hyperreal in which European Americans fabricate and mass produce what a true Indian should consist of which usually includes a series of incredibly racist and incorrect stereotypes. But that is what constitutes as "real" for this group of people (Vizenor *Narrative Chance* 5).

fail to enact when discussing history, bodies, and film, Audre Lorde engages the psychological and emotional aspects of these divisions. In “A Litany for Survival,” Lorde describes the dilemma of living on a border and what feels like the edges of society and reality. At the start of her poem Lorde explains both the movement and lack of movement that occurs within this space. She says:

For those of us who live at the shoreline
 standing upon the constant edges of decision
 crucial and alone
 for those of us who cannot indulge
 the passing dreams of choice
 who love in doorways coming and going
 in the hours between dawns
 looking inward and outward
 at once before and after
 seeking a now that can breed
 futures
 like bread in our children's mouths
 so their dreams will not reflect the death of ours. (2208)

Lorde discusses the prevalence and infectious nature of fear. But this fear is not just an emotion of “fear” but something both emotional and physical. It becomes a wall, a division, a rhetorical border. As Lorde describes the fear of the sun’s inability to rise or to set, of not having enough food to feed your children, of not being heard and of having nothing to say, we can understand that this is an internalized fear. A fear to live. A fear

to exist. A fear to die. A fear to have survived. And that's just it, because throughout the poem, Lorde reminds us that "We were never meant to survive" (2209). Lorde, like Anzaldúa, is talking about this particular space that certainly has something to do with place, as with the US/Mexico border that is a specific place, but it has more to do with consciousness, realization, recognition, an awakening of sorts. It also reaches across the color lines and illustrates that to live in the borderlands means to live in space of indeterminacy, to constantly be at war, to fight the waves of history, to defy and have defied the genocidal attempts. Throughout the poem, as well, Lorde reminds us that in spite of all the genocidal attempts, "[f]or all of us / this instant and this triumph / We were never meant to survive" (2209). To live in the borderlands is to live remembering, "we were never meant to survive." The inhabitants of the border, the third space, *los atravesados* are not victims but survivors of colonialist campaigns. We have survived.

Lorde's description of living on the margins encapsulates the notion of borders. Her repetition of "for those of us" initially allows her to demark a set group of people, while also placing herself within it. This is significant because it allows her to narrow down the subject to "us," while at the same time making it her own as well. Lorde's use of doorways rhetorically creates both an enclosed space and signals the capacity for movement and shifting. Additionally, the inclusion of images such as of "coming and going," "inward and outward," "before and after" make this doorway a border through which people travel and also localizes these movements. These movements though are also similar in attempt to what Anzaldúa describes with the borderlands—the constant movement of the past, present and future all circling about each other. Essentially, Lorde explains that we stand at the edges of these borderlands. We can contain the

chaos within and also have the strength to dismantle the walls that seek to confine us. We must be the crossroads.

Lastly, in Ellison's *Invisible Man*, the narrator does not understand that his race and role within society has made him hyper-visible, leading him instead to a state of perpetual invisibility. The narrator discovers that his invisibility is rhetorically imposed upon his body by whites in order to erase him. To be invisible and to recognize one's invisibility is to identify our existence within a third and closed off space, a world of boundaries, limitations, and restrictions. Ellison writes: "Step outside the narrow borders of what men call reality and you step into chaos...or imagination" (576). If we think of the living beyond the margins of history as what European American conceptualize as our "place," as people of color, then to step outside of these limitations is to step into chaos and step into the unknown. It is not that we cannot cross over; it is that to cross over we must imagine the possibilities of what it means for European Americans to have to hear and recognize the presence of our bodies, voices, and histories. But in order to do this, we must recognize that we have internalized racism and have been led to believe we belong on the margins of society.

Within this space, as well, the invisible man explains that he must engage the world in spite of his invisibility for his and his fellow humans' survival. He says, "Our fate is to become one, and yet many—This is not prophecy, but description" (577). Similar to many scholars of color, Ellison argues that our destiny lies not in our ability to separate and remain isolated from each other. He suggests that our destiny as a society is mutually dependent. Additionally, though, in having our future mutually dependent, we should be united in our efforts as well. The invisible man says:

In going underground, I whipped it all except the mind, the *mind*. And the mind that has conceived a plan of living must never lose sight of the chaos against which that pattern was conceived. That goes for societies as well as for individuals. Thus, having tried to give pattern to the chaos which lives within the pattern of your certainties, I must come out, I must emerge (580-581).

Here, Ellison establishes a few significant arguments. Primarily, if we consider that living within the borderlands consists of a particular chaos, then to create a pattern of this is to learn to control the chaos, time, and history. The rhetorical initiation of this pattern is a way to control the language and use the available tools to interrogate and challenge the colonial enactments upon our bodies and histories. These patterns are and exist within the decolonial imaginary. To create the pattern then is to find the way out. However, this understanding of the processes within the borderlands must acknowledge that the ways in which we are trained to conceive of patterns are dependent on systems that are used to confine us to begin with. In other words, in the same way Powell and Villanueva explain, when the ways in which we study people of color within the “institutions” are using the same tools used to oppress them, then we have to break the pattern.⁹ As such, being witness to the patterns, the construction and architects of these patterns, Ellison explains that we must emerge and acknowledge the conflict within us.

Working through the inner conflict, for example, bell hooks argues that when women of color fail to recognize the root of the racism and sexist oppression, we fail

⁹ See Malea Powell, “Blood & Scholarship: One Mixed-blood’s Story”; Victor Villanueva, “On the Rhetorics and Precedents of Racism.”

ourselves and we fail to remedy the situation. In *Feminist Theory From Margin to Center*, hooks argues that the role of women of color within feminism as in the Women's Liberation Movement is not only complicated but dependent on the good graces of the white women running the show. Here I'm referring specifically to what hooks calls a central tenet of modern feminist thought, namely, that "all women are oppressed" (5). hooks explains that this tenet carries a series of problematic implications that suggest that all women are oppressed equally because their lives and roles within society operate under identical circumstances, which is not true, of course (5). hooks instead asserts that "[b]eing oppressed means the *absence of choices*" (5 hooks italics). Women of color do not have the same available choices white women have, not because they are women, but because they are of color. hooks explains: "White women and black men have it both ways. They can act as oppressor or be oppressed. Black men may be victimized by racism, but sexism allows them to act as exploiters and oppressors of women. White women may be victimized by sexism, but racism enables them to act as exploiters and oppressors of black people" (16). Thus, hooks teaches us that when women of color too readily align themselves with white feminists, women of color will not be addressing all of the problems they are fighting, because even within this system they will be racially oppressed.

hooks argues that our failure to acknowledge and/or understand the multiple rhetorical borders we face is not only detrimental to women of color but can also lead to a perpetual state of oppression. hooks says: "Women of color must confront our absorption of white supremacist beliefs, 'internalized racism,' which may lead us to feel self-hate, to vent anger and rage at injustice at one another rather than at oppressive

forces, to hurt and abuse one another, or to lead one ethnic group to make no effort to communicate with another”(57). By using the borderlands and the decolonial imaginary as a space to interrogate the sources of oppression as outlined here by hooks, we as women of color and as people of color can more readily address these problems directly. As such, by thinking about Anzaldúa, Lorde, and hooks we can argue that woman of color’s ability to recognize the root of the problem—i.e. internalized racism—is a source of power and serves as a basis for the initiation of alliances and the creation of communities. The ability to understand this is liberating. These women’s ability to rise above this constraint and build communities with one another allows them to become the crossroad.

And it is within this framework that Ellison calls for social justice and active participation as a way to enact the crossroads, as a way to become the crossroad for others. In the epilogue, the invisible man explains that the hibernation period is over and that he must emerge: “Even hibernations can be overdone, come to think of it. Perhaps that’s my greatest social crime, I’ve overstayed my hibernation, since there’s a possibility that even an invisible man has a socially responsible role to play” (581). If we consider that our prolonged habitation of this third space and residency as *los atravesados* is a hibernation of sorts, then Ellison’s suggestion is that in order to change the world, to build bridges, to create alliances then we must emerge from the colonial imposition upon our histories and bodies. Perhaps even to emerge with the conflict within us in order to change the patterns and the construction of the patterns. But ultimately, Ellison places the burden on any would-be-reader when he says, “Who knows but that, on the lower frequencies, I speak for you?” (581). In this final line,

Ellison acknowledges that he has escaped the patterns completely and hopes other will heed his call and follow. Following Ellison, Lorde, and Erdrich, Chapter V “Decolonizing the Writing Classroom: Pedagogical Storytelling Practices and Rhetorical Alliances between Literatures and Rhetorics” asserts that the process of changing the structure of academia, of building bridges and alliances starts by decolonizing the writing classroom. And precisely because this methodology is built recognizing the necessary interdisciplinary alliances of rhetorics and poetics, in my final chapter I utilize storytelling practices within the writing classroom as a decolonial approach in the construction of curricula and pedagogies.

Conclusion

While working within the confines of a colonizing institution, we as scholars of color and our allies have to acknowledge the strength in our numbers. We also have to recognize that the tools to dismantle the master’s house have not only always been available but have been enacted by multiple writers of color for generations. Our role is to responsibly and ethically engage these rhetorical strategies and practices and allow the texts to speak for themselves by being ethical and responsible in our approaches. Additionally, we must recognize that our interdisciplinary alliances are vital to the rhetorical creation and enactment of stories that defy the colonial gaze and allow us to build communities between texts, bodies, histories, and epistemologies. Ultimately, using the borderlands, the decolonial imaginary, and the third space to create a new discourse that both interrogates and challenges colonial imposition upon interdisciplinary works of color allow the healing process to be enacted and privileges a

practice of building alliances and communities in our research, departments, and communities.

In my next chapter, “Reclaiming Bodies, Spaces, and History: Trickster Rhetorics in Wendy Rose’s *The Halfbreed Chronicles*” I argue that Rose utilizes trickster rhetorics to both defy the colonial gaze upon her narrative and challenge the rules imposed by academia that seeks to control how she can tell her story. In my third chapter “American Indian Rhetorics of Survivance and Recovery: Enacting Rhetorics of Survivance in 19th Century European American Literature,” I juxtapose Leslie Marmon Silko’s rhetorical storytelling structure upon Henry David Thoreau’s autobiographical account in “The Allegash and East Branch” in order to tease out the embedded narratives of characters that defy colonial impositions. By interrogating these stories from a third space, I demonstrate how real and fictional characters enact rhetorics of survivance to not only have their stories heard but also to create alliances. My fourth chapter “Rhetorics of Translation and Survivance: The Ethical Translation of Stories, Lands, and Bodies in the Chicano Poetry of Tino Villanueva” interrogates the powerful role bestowed on translated texts and by association the translation of bodies and histories. Essentially, by working through *Crónica de Mis Años Peores*, I illustrate that in the borderlands there are particular rhetorics and strategies of translation enacted between Villanueva’s Spanish text and the provided English mistranslation that ultimately defies and challenges the rhetorical capacity of a translation to retell a story through a different framework, and a distinct and dominating culture. And in the final chapter, “Decolonizing the Writing Classroom: Pedagogical Storytelling Practices and the

Rhetorical Alliances between Literatures and Rhetorics,” I illustrate the implications of bringing this theoretical framework into the writing classroom.

CHAPTER II

RECLAIMING BODIES, SPACES, AND HISTORIES: WENDY ROSE'S TRICKSTER RHETORICS IN *THE HALFBREED CHRONICLES*

I expected my skin and my blood
to ripen, not be ripped from my bones;
like fallen fruit I am peeled, tasted,
discarded. My seeds open
and have no future.

Now there has been no past.

–Wendy Rose

“I Expected My Skin and My Blood to Ripen.”

Introduction

In “I Expected My Skin and My Blood to Ripen” Wendy Rose (Miwok-Hopi) confronts the long history of abuse, exploitation, and destruction of Indigenous peoples. This poem was written in response to the auctioned sale of the clothing and other personal items taken and torn off the bodies of the 300 or more unarmed Lakota men, women, and children who were murdered during the Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890: “[items pictured for sale] moccasins \$140; hide scraper \$350; buckskin shirt \$1200; womens’ leggings \$275; bone breastplate \$1000” (Rose 18). But within this poem, even from the first lines, quoted above, Rose illustrates that this massacre was an assault on Lakota women and children, that this massacre was a vicious attempt to clear the land, that this massacre has been utilized as a profitable enterprise, and that this massacre

represents the continuous attacks on Indigenous women and children since the arrival of Columbus. In this poem, in *The Halfbreed Chronicles*, and in a lot of her work, Rose asserts that the violence and abuse of Indigenous people, specifically Indigenous women and children is rampant both within the United States and beyond. And in her work, Rose is quick to remind us that this country is built on the genocide of Indigenous peoples. Andrea Smith, for example, utilizes Luana Ross to explain that “it has never been against US law to commit genocide against Indigenous peoples—in fact, genocide is the law of the country. The United States could not exist without it. In the United States, democracy is actually the alibi for genocide—it is a practice that covers up United States colonial control over indigenous lands” (“Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars...” 70). Such a menacing thought pervades Rose’s poetry and within her work she challenges the representation of Indigenous bodies, stories, and lands within the colonizing history of the United States.

In *The Halfbreed Chronicles* Rose exemplifies the danger of an ongoing and unacknowledged colonial campaign against Indigenous peoples and lands. She asserts that such colonialist and misogynistic practices are detrimental to Indigenous women, and that the racialized constructs of colonialism open the door for the perpetual violence against women of color. Thus, in *The Halfbreed Chronicles* she utilizes “halfbreed” as a rhetorical trope to draw rhetorical alliances between people of color. Rose argues that a part of actively changing the systemic oppression of people of color and to disrupt and to stop the violence perpetuated against the bodies of women of color and their children is to challenge and interrogate the ongoing colonial land expansion initiatives that still seeks to clear the land of not only Indigenous people but all people of color. In this

chapter, I argue that by building alliances and enacting acts of survivance, Wendy Rose utilizes *trickster rhetorics* to make visible the enduring violent capitalist strategies against communities of color, women's bodies, and stories by people of color. I argue that Rose's use of *mixed-blood rhetorics* defies the construction of her narrative, the rules by which she is allowed to tell her story, and is not only an active practice of survivance but is a way to reclaim the story, the body, and the land. Additionally, I demonstrate that recognizing these tactics and rhetorical patterns in the text allows us to hear another story, to recover the story that is hidden behind the racialized constructions of language and storytelling. Lastly, I argue that as scholars we are too often complacent with the rules of the academy, failing to recognize that these rules are oppressive, prohibitive, and irresponsible to the work by people of color. Operating under such praxis keeps us from unlimited amounts of knowledge that gets subdued under the weight of racialized hierarchies and other divisive and oppressive constructions within the academy. As such, in order to defy the colonial and imperialist practices within the academy, we as scholars must be more diligent, ethical, and responsive to the work by people of color, wary of essentializing and racist tropes in our approach, and cognizant of the capacity of our work to perpetuate colonialist and racialized practices unto communities of color.

Bearing Witness to the Violence against Women of Color

Stating that the violence against women of color is well documented is not only a misstatement but a negligent assumption about governmental and other corporatized entities role in the perpetual vicious attacks on them. Furthermore, as the example

provided by Rose's poem "I Expected My Skin and My Blood to Ripen" illustrates, the events surrounding the Wounded Knee Massacre were an attack on Indigenous lands, Indigenous women's bodies and reproductive rights, and Indigenous children. American Horse notes that "[t]he fact of the killing of the women, and more especially the killing of the young boys and girls who are to go to make up the future strength of the Indian people is the saddest part of the whole affair and we feel it very sorely" (qtd. in Stannard 127). These are not singular or obsolete attacks on Indigenous people. These attacks are demonstrative of continuous genocidal attempts on Indigenous peoples. By killing Indigenous children, they kill the future. By killing Indigenous women and altering their capacity to bear children, they kill the future. By killing Indigenous men, women, and children, they are participating in the systematic genocide and attack on Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, as Rose explains in this poem, the sale of their personal items illustrates that the continued attacks on Indigenous people are deemed as acceptable, that the colonization of the Americas has been recognized as glorious time in the past, and therefore these personal items become souvenirs and trophies. But as Rose explains throughout *The Halfbreed Chronicles*, these attacks result from ongoing colonial campaigns against Indigenous peoples and lands, that the violence against women of color, their bodies, and their children continues to be perpetuated, and our neglectful treatment of these events makes us complacent.

Rose, among a series of other scholars and activists, asserts that colonialism and the racialized constructions of hierarchies, mappings, dispossessions of lands and histories, oppressions, and the continued genocidal attacks on Indigenous people and really most people of color continues within this and most other continents. For

example, in “Spiritual Appropriation as Sexual Violence,” Andrea Smith argues that “[t]he United States cannot stop oppressing Indian people without fundamentally challenging its hegemonic position or multinational capitalist operations. If we frame Native genocide from a materialist perspective, then we have to rethink our analysis of non- Native ignorance about Native cultures” (98). Genocide is the law of the land. And unless we challenge the system then we continue to perpetuate it in the stories we hear, read, and “study” about Indigenous people. Smith calls us to interrogate and challenge the colonial beliefs of providential rights to Indigenous lands and bodies. She says that “without such a reappraisal, most efforts to ‘know’ Indians will be necessarily less than benevolent in their intent and in their effects” (Smith “Spiritual Appropriation” 98-99). Thus, a significant aspect of challenging both the residual and continues effects of these genocides is coming to know and understand our negligent complacency with it, in the stories that are written about it, in the stories that are silenced about it, and in the way we are allowed to tell the stories the free us.

Additionally, as part of the negligent complacency with enduring colonialist practices consists of acknowledging the racialized effects of x. For example, in “Not an Indian Tradition: The Sexual Colonization of Indigenous peoples” Andrea Smith argues that “when a Native woman suffers abuse, this abuse is not just an attack on her identity as a woman, but on her identity as Native. The issues of colonial, race, and gender oppression cannot be separated” (71). Failing to recognize the link between these concepts will keep us from putting a stop to these attacks. Furthermore, Smith contends that “[w]omen of color do not just face quantitatively more issues when they suffer violence (that is, less media attention, language barriers, lack of support in the judicial

system, etc.) but their experience is qualitatively different from that of white women” (“Not an Indian Tradition” 71). The attacks on women of color are exacerbated by their inability to have their stories receive the amount of attention and respect that they deserve. And because the attacks on their bodies fulfill the colonial goals of the land, their abuse, exploitation, sterilization, and murder become a part of the backdrop of American colonial history.

Rose exemplifies that throughout *The Halfbreed Chronicles* the continuance and residual effects of colonialism mark the stories, bodies, and lands of not only the United States but across the majority of the world. Because, as Smith reminds us, Indigenous people as well as other people of color have survived the wars unleashed upon our lands, our bodies, and our stories, we are perceived as a threat. Our bodies mark this space; remind the colonizer of their crimes and their brutalities; and we are a threat to their construction of history (Smith “Spiritual Appropriation...” 98). In the face of such crimes, in response to so much hate, and to counter the effects these ongoing policies and their legacies have upon people of color, Rose asserts that we need to build alliances, we need to find the rhetoric by which to build and tell our stories, and we need practice survivance.

Rhetorical Alliances

“Halfbreed” is derogatory term used to describe children born of Indigenous and European parentage. The term “halfbreed” when used to describe people of mixed heritage is problematic because it is dehumanizing and because it is essentially equating their ancestry to an abnormal creation defying the standards of what constitutes a true

person.¹⁰ And precisely because this term is so troublesome, it is important to interrogate Rose's rhetorical use of it in *The Halfbreed Chronicles*. Jack Forbes argues that "[a]rising out of the [first 300 years of European colonialism in the Americas] a number of terms for racial hybrids (or even unmixed populations) which the colonist may have used casually or indifferent times" (57). Forbes explains that the term "halfbreed" or "halfbred," however, was not used in dictionaries in reference to any racial mixture at least until 1828 (72). But in 1751, in South Carolina, Andrew White at Keawohee in the Cherokee Nation was referred to as a "half-breed fellow" after he killed a European and helped free six slaves (Forbes 72). After that Forbes notes a series of occasions during which the term "halfbreed" appeared and notes it was used "in a general way and could be used to refer to more than one type of racial mixture" (73). Forbes does note, however, the relationship between not only "halfbreed," "halfblood," and "half-caste," but also to mestizo, metis, mullata, mustee and sambo, among other labels (79).

In multiple writings, Rose argues that her use of "halfbreed" is not in reference to anything biological. For example, in the introduction to her collection *Bone Dance*, she explains her use of "halfbreed":

In exploring what it means to be a "halfbreed," I learned that this is not a condition of genetics and has nothing to do with ancestry or race.

Instead, "halfbreed" is a condition of history, a result of experience, of dislocation and reunions, and of choices made for better or worse. I

began to study the lives of individuals who, for reason I didn't know,

¹⁰ As such, throughout this chapter, "halfbreed" will appear in quotation marks whenever I'm using it in order to acknowledge the fact that this is a problematic term and out of respect for my readers.

profoundly affected me. All were victims of their place in history in some way. All were colonized souls. *The Halfbreed Chronicles* emerged from listening to those voices. ... In retrospect, I also have to take note of the fact that many of these “halfbreeds” did not survive the event that defined them, while others have endured or are still caught up in the whirlwind of their fate. (Rose xvi)

According to Rose’s guidelines, “halfbreeds” are colonized bodies and/or people living in colonized spaces and have been recreated/fabricated/simulated by the history written on them. Although, Rose establishes that “halfbreeds” are “victims of their place in history,” suggesting perhaps a lack of power/control or agency over their lives and/or the story written about them, she also notes that “halfbreeds” have survived and are still fighting.

While the term “halfbreed” is problematic, it’s significant that Wendy Rose chose this word. As a woman of Hopi, Miwok and Scottish ancestry she argues that she does not have enough of either ancestries and notes that both her Indigenous and European relatives have “thrown her away” (Rose, “Neon Scars” 97).¹¹ She says, “I’ve always thought in terms of being a half-breed because that is the way that both sides of the family treated me. The white part of the family wanted nothing to do...with me...The Hopi side of my family is more sympathetic to my situation, but our lineage is through the mother, and... having a Hopi father means I have no real legitimate place in Hopi society” (qtd. in Coltelli 123). Rose’s adoption of “halfbreed” then appears to be

¹¹ In “Neon Scars,” Rose explains that she has always felt that both sides of her family “threw” her away. She explains that she was never accepted by either side of her family and was actually homeless at the age of 14 (97-101). Rose explains that her mother was mainly Scottish and Irish but also Miwok.

both self-imposed and also reclaimed. She recognizes that her roles on both sides of her family have made her feel like an outsider, but she has also taken ownership of the term. By calling herself a “halfbreed” she cannot be hurt by it; it cannot be used as a weapon against her. She has labeled herself as such, and there is a source of power attached to her rhetorical choice.

Additionally, Rose’s choice to label herself as a “halfbreed” is somewhat similar to Gerald Vizenor’s rejection of the label of “Indian”—since it is thickly weighed by colonial enactments—for the self-imposed choice of postindian, which is “the absence of the invention, and the end of representation in literature” (“Postindian Warriors” 11). By rejecting the colonial label of Indian, the postindian takes control of the narratives written about them and refuses to be recreated and fabricated within literature. The word “Indian” still exists within “postindian,” but the power has shifted since it is Vizenor who has chosen to keep the word and has made the choice as to how it will be used.

Furthermore, Rose’s use of “halfbreed” is a way to draw rhetorical alliances with multiple groups of people similar to the arguments posed by Native scholars such as Vizenor and Powell. Vizenor explains that he is a “crossblood on the natural margins of cultural contradance. My father was from the White Earth Reservation in Minneapolis, a newcomer to the city, and my mother lived in Minneapolis. The chance union of my parents was a contradiction of suspensive racialism; neither war nor the ruins of representation in literature” (“Envoy to Haiku 25). As Vizenor explains here, he considers himself a “crossblood” in regards to his ancestry, similar to the use of “mixed-blood,” which according to Powell, “Among many Indian peoples, a mixed-blood is literally a person whose blood-quantum is mixed usually Indian and European

American. Mixed-bloods are sometimes seen as tainted, neither an ‘Indian’ nor a ‘White’” (“Blood and Scholarship” 12). But the rhetorical and theoretical use of both Vizenor’s “crossblood” and Powell’s “mixed-blood” extends beyond the definition or categorization of racial mixture. For example, Powell explains that according to Vizenor from his book *Crossbloods: Bone Courts, Bingo and Other Reports*, “Crossbloods are ‘the agonistic survivors’ of imperialism, ‘a postmodern tribal bloodline, an encounter with racialism, colonial duplicities, sentimental monogenism, and generic cultures’; ‘crossbloods are communal, and their stories are splendid considerations of survivance’” (qtd. in “Blood and Scholarship” 14). Furthermore, Powell asserts that she uses “mixed-blood” “as a figurative description for a person who ‘lives’ between cultures that are epistemologically contradictory and that experiences asymmetrical power relations” (“Blood and Scholarship” 12). By using “halfbreed” Rose creates a space that is inherently based on alliances. She creates a space that allows us to communicate, unite, and defend each other.

Rose’s use of “halfbreed” then asserts a different use of language and/or the definitions that construct people of color. Aligning Rose with Vizenor and Powell, Rose is in fact engaging a different rhetoric and politic. Rose’s use of “halfbreed” paves the way to build cross cultural alliances that mediate and challenge the stories and spaces people of color can and do inhabit while enabling our capacity to dismantle the discourse that continues to dispossess, erase, and destroy us in a myriad of ways. Additionally, this rhetoric and politic that Rose constructs with “halfbreed” aligns itself with Chicana theorist Cherrie Moraga who says that “[a] theory in the flesh means one where the physical realities of our lives—our skin color, the land or concrete we grew up on, our

sexual longings—all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity” (23). Rose’s reclamation of “halfbreed,” as a necessity born out of the politics surrounding land acquisition and dispossession, constructions of histories and the subsequent erasures of people of color, is a theory of the flesh. The constant struggle and fight against oppressive, racialized, and sexualized remnants of colonization that mark the bodies of women of color as dangerous, that mark their reproductive rights and their children as deviant, excessive, and unwanted, and that mark their stories that validate their presence, sense of humanity, and rightful authority to a time and space as untrue and illogical calls for a politic of cross cultural alliances and for stories of survivance using trickster and mixed-blood rhetorics.

Trickster Rhetorics & Mixed-blood Rhetorics: Acts of Survivance

i am a dangerous woman
 but the weapon is not visible
 security will never find it
 they can’t hear the clicking
 of the gun
 inside my head

—Joy Harjo “*I am a Dangerous Woman*”

(from *That’s What She Said* 128-129)

Joy Harjo’s poem “I am a Dangerous Woman” illustrates that the most powerful weapon a woman of color can yield is her mind. Through the vast attacks on women’s bodies, women of color have the capacity to disarm their oppressors with their stories.

We must recognize, however, how the language we use and the very construction of our stories are predicated by colonialism. Smith argues that “Our survival strategies and resistance to white supremacy are set by the system of white supremacy itself. What keeps us trapped within our particular pillars of white supremacy is that we are seduced with the prospect of being able to participate in the other pillars” (Smith “Heteropatriarchy” 69). And because, as Audre Lorde reminds us, “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house” (99), we must recognize that the language we use and the construction and rules of that language needs to be responsive to the requirements of the discourse women of color must engage. We need to “reinvent the enemy’s language.”¹² We need to reinvent how we use language and the rules that govern it. In “‘I Give You Back’: Indigenous Women Writing to Survive” Elizabeth Archuleta argues that “Indigenous women do not rely solely on Western tools, worldviews, or epistemologies as methods of interpretation. Indigenous women reject paradigms that ask us to disassociate ourselves from our lived experiences before we can claim to have the skills and knowledge to theorize” (88-89). Reinventing the language involves learning to recognize the rhetorical patterns that make meaning and utilizing these patterns to break language down, see how it constructs discourse, and reworking it to suit our needs. This is the process of trickster rhetorics and mixed-blood rhetorics to enact survivance.

In the 1990s the trickster, and more specifically trickster criticism, was at its peak and was not only overused but also misused by scholars to read Native literary texts.

¹² The phrase “reinventing the enemy’s language” comes from the title of Joy Harjo and Gloria Bird’s anthology *Reinventing the Enemy’s Language: Contemporary Native Women’s Writing in North America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997).

Kristina Fagan explains that “the trouble with the trickster archetype was assumed to be an inevitable part of Indigenous cultures, and so the criticism paid little attention to the historical and cultural specifics of why and how particular Indigenous writers were drawing on particular mythical figures” (3). Additionally, the “‘trickster’ became the adjective, a label to put on Native humour, art, theatre and literature” (Fagan 7). As a result of this use, almost all rhetorical strategies enacted by Indigenous writers were attributed to the trickster: and in doing so, Indigenous writers are robbed of their agency because it appears as if it is the “trickster doing all work,” and thus the trickster as a trope “loses its usefulness as a term of analysis” (9). Instead, Indigenous scholars such as Craig Womack argue, “we are trying to avoid the kind of literary work that has been so popular in our field in which people avoid historical research and base their criticism exclusively on tropes and symbols [such as the trickster]” (qtd. in Fagan 10).

As such, my understanding and discussion of the trickster shifts from that which is used as a tool for criticism and move into the realm of trickster discourse and, more specifically, trickster rhetorics as based on the work of Gerald Vizenor and Malea Powell. According to Vizenor:

- The tribal trickster is [androgynous] (188) a liberator and healer in a narrative, a comic sign, communal signification and a discourse with imagination (187).
- The trickster is never the same in oral and translated narratives; however, these differences are resolved in comic holotropes and discourse in modern literature.

- The trickster has a real voice, a mythic and communal voice in imagination; but in translation the isolated voice or representation of the trickster is neither real nor mythic....
- The trickster is real in those who imagine the narrative, in the narrative voices. (189-190)

The trickster as defined by Vizenor is a complex force. It exists in the spaces between the real the imagined, breaking down paradigms and binaries. It exists in the text, in the words, in the songs, in the language, but it cannot be contained by it. It exists in the words that are not said, but the trickster is never absent or silent. Additionally, Vizenor illustrates that “halfbreeds” make the best tricksters. Louis Owens explains that:

Cultures can and indeed cannot do otherwise than come together and deal with one another, not only within the transcultural region of frontiers or borders but also within the hybridized individual, Vizenor’s “crossblood,” who internalizes those frontier or borders spaces. As conceived by Vizenor, and by Native American authors generally, however, the mixedblood is not a cultural broker but a cultural breaker, break-dancing trickster fashion through all signs, fracturing the self-reflexive mirror of the dominant center, deconstructing rigid borders, slipping between the seams, embodying contradictions, and contradancing across every boundary (40-1).

As Owens explains here, “halfbreeds,” “mixedbloods” and “crossbloods” are the best trickster because he/she is not confined to frontiers or borders but is able to transcend all. Additionally, they are the best tricksters because they are not only able to emulate the

contradictions of manifest manners but are free themselves from such simulations. The fact remains that there are some borders that need to be insisted on; that the disruption of these borders can be detrimental to communities of color and land bases; and that historically the destruction of some borders have led to the destruction of Indigenous peoples.

As such, trickster rhetorics is the means by which to undo and subvert a dominant discourse within which Indigenous peoples exist as the hyperreal (Vizenor *Narrative Chance* 5). The hyperreal Indian is the result of white Americans constructing, fabricating, creating what it assumes, imagines, and expects an Indigenous person to consist of. Such simulations of the hyperreal Indian are romanticized, objectified, unreal representations. But in the face of these simulations, Indigenous peoples appear to be fake Indians. In other words, white America constructs what it imagines an Indian looks like: feathers, loin cloth, riding into the sunset, and usually dead or dying off. The mere existence of Indigenous people defies these constructions (Vizenor *Narrative Chance* 5). Gerald Vizenor argues that the trickster narrative “arises in agonistic imagination; a wild venture in communal discourse, an uncertain humor that denies aestheticism, translation, and imposed representations” (*The Trickster of Liberty* x). The trickster rejects such simulations and the hyperreal. Vizenor says the trickster is “comic nature in a language game, not a real person or ‘being’ in the ontological sense. Tribal tricksters are embodied in imagination and liberate the mind; an androgyny, she would repudiate translations and imposed representations, as he would bare [sic] the contradictions of the striptease” (*The Trickster of Liberty* x). Accordingly, trickster rhetorics outline the language used to create, recreate and redefine meaning: “Words,

then, are metaphors and the trickster is a comic holotrope, and interior landscape ‘behind what discourse says.’ The trick, in seven words, is to elude historicism, racial representations, and remain historical” (Vizenor *The Trickster of Liberty* xi).

Malea Powell explains that for Vizenor to play trickster is “to use our knowledge of the language and structure that compose the narratives that bind us as instruments to cut away those same oppressive stories” (9). Essentially, trickster rhetorics break language down to see how it is creating meaning, how it is mapping reality, and how we are written within it. Powell explains that:

[t]he trickster is many things, and is no thing as well. Ambivalent, androgynous, anti-definitional, the trickster is slippery and constantly mutable...Trickster discourse is deflative; it exposes the lies we tell ourselves and, at the same time, exposes the necessity of those lies to our daily material existence...The trickster asks us to be fully conscious to the simple inconsistencies that inhabit our reality (“Blood and Scholarship...” 9).

Trickster rhetorics examine the “reality” that has been created for us. Trickster rhetorics study the language that has been used to confine us and use that same language to release us. Such is the rhetorics that Rose engages within *The Halfbreed Chronicles*. All of the poems are seemingly telling one story, but there are actually counter-narratives embedded within the language.

The act of creating new stories and/or even of retelling stories is act of survivance. Vizenor defines survivance as “an active sense of presence over absence, deracination, and oblivion: survivance is the continuance of stories, not a mere reaction,

however pertinent” (“Aesthetics of Survivance” 1). Furthermore, “survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, detractions, obtrusions, the unbearable sentiments of tragedy, and the legacy of victimry” (Vizenor, “Aesthetics...” 1). It is precisely within this framework that I argue Rose engages trickster discourse. The story she presents within each poem is seemingly straightforward and focused on the offenses committed against Indigenous people. These are certainly present and valid readings. However, within these stories, Rose enacts counter-narratives of survivance so that the stories that we can recover refuse to make Indigenous people into perpetual victims. In the counter-narratives, Rose illustrates how Indigenous women enact what Malea Powell defines as trickster rhetorics of survivance in which they not only have their stories heard, are the central focus of their stories, but also denounce the crimes committed against them, their bodies, their children, and their lands. Furthermore, in “Rhetorics of Survivance,” Powell explains:

For Vizenor, and for myself, this means not only reimagining the possibilities for existence and ironic identity within Native communities, but also reimagining a scholarly relationship to writings by Indian peoples, one that hears the multiplicities in those writings and in the stories told about them (401).

Thus, a part of the practice of engaging trickster rhetorics and survivance is listening—listening not in the absent minded just waiting to absorb information, but in the active listening sense. Listening when there are no words being said and/or written. Listening to the glimpses behind each word that is present. Listening to the silence. Listening to the gaps. Listening with our imaginations.

As Vizenor and Powell assert, a significant tenet of survivance is the telling and retelling of stories. Stories allow us to heal. Stories release us. Aurora Levins Morales in *Medicine Stories* calls us to utilize stories to bear witness: “Politicizing the abuse, coming to understand its social context and meaning is a large part of what made it possible to recover; and personalizing history, making a vast sweep of people and events intimate and real, is part of what makes it potent, usable, medicinal” (3). Medicinal stories are survivance stories. Talking about the abuse women of color have faced and continue to face provides the space by which to begin healing. Additionally, the process of writing, of using stories to bear witness, of enacting survivance allows us to not only heal the writer but promotes healing for everyone (Archuleta 98).

In addition or in relation to trickster rhetorics and survivance as acts by which to counter the colonial impositions on the ways we use language and tell stories, we need a language that defies these rhetorical colorizations and allow us to reset the rules for how we can bear witness. And as more thoroughly discussed in Chapter I, because of the racialized hierarchies within academia that end up marginalizing, erasing, and denying the work by people of color, the rules for how stories are constructed, who gets to tell the stories, and who is able to hear them are dependent on colonial impositions and imperialist traditions. Within such paradigms the voices of women of color are continually silenced. Within such paradigms it becomes increasingly difficult to confront the oppressors because doing so will only further silence the stories we have to tell. And because, as Archuleta explains, the healing that can be achieved through storytelling has the capacity to reach so many of its readers, we need to “realize that healing and empowerment cannot take place until we identify the many sources of our

oppression. Speaking out and naming the enemy reveals the central role language can play in our empowerment and continued existence” (Archuleta 92). In order to counter these rules, to name our oppressors, and to still have our stories heard, we need a methodology to that will denounce imperialist rules that control how women of color are allowed to tell stories.

This practice, this methodology of both how we approach a text and how a text is constructed to subvert colonial impositions is what Powell calls mixed blood rhetorics:

Practicing this kind of relational mixed-blood rhetoric, then, means following the Academy’s, the discipline’s “rules” by transgressing them, not just to oppose them but to transform them, to change utterly the grounds upon which our scholarship exists. This rhetoric, then, takes a kind of cross-blood understanding and materiality, a form of mixed-blood movement in a theoretical space, that the Academy’s legitimizing narrative is slow to acknowledge and value. Such a rhetoric is based on relationality and movement across cultural/institutional boundaries, and presupposes that those who enact it have an experiential understanding of the cultures/institutions that they propose to transverse (10).

There is a cultural understanding, a localization, and a defiance that is ingrained within mixed-blood rhetorics. It’s the recognition of the multiple concordant and discordant voices that a writer carries and that a reader hears. It’s a recognition of place, space, and time. It’s also the recognition and rejection of the rules that construct our realities. To engage mixed-blood rhetorics is not only to read against the grain. Mixed-blood rhetorics are an active practice of defiance. *Mixed-blood* rhetorics and *trickster* rhetorics

are the process of survivance. The needed words are always present to build the stories. The text and subtext merge, collide, divide, and weave back together again. It's a living reading of story—a reading that breathes, shifts and changes as we build upon it and within it. It is a reading that is as much of the authors' as it is of the readers, because by recognizing and engaging the mixed-blood and trickster rhetorics we mutually create stories. By engaging the mixed-blood and trickster rhetorics within this poetry, I am using poetry to write a story. I am using poetry to build theory. I am using theory to explain how the world works around us. But I am also using stories to create stories.

Survivance Stories: Reclaiming the Bodies, Lands, and Stories in The Halfbreed Chronicles

When stories are lost within a text because the tools used to study them are the same used to oppress them, then we are continuing to participate in this imperialist campaign.¹³ As scholars we need to find the means by which to allow these stories to speak for themselves and to claim their rightful space with the academy. As scholars we need to find the language to dismantle the master's house. By reading poetics rhetorically and engaging the underlying trickster rhetorics embedded within the language of Rose's poems, we get to hear a new story. By using trickster rhetorics to tell a new story embedded within Rose's language, we are able to recognize not only how language can be used as a weapon to confine, exploit, and destroy people but also that the exact same words can be deployed as weapons of our own.

¹³ Powell in her article "Blood and Scholarship" argues that a "second-wave genocide" occurs when "Indians can be studied only within the terms of the oppressor; the Academy becomes just another powerful agent of imperialism" (4).

In Rose's construction of "Loo-Wit," she enacts trickster rhetorics by setting the rules for how this poem is to be read from the start. In title of "Loo-Wit" Rose provides a footnote in which she explains that this is the "Cowlitz name for Mount St. Helens in Washington." The volcano's name is "Loo-Wit," but the arrival of settlers imposed the name of Mount St. Helens upon this space. Since Rose does not include the name of Mount St. Helens within the poem itself, her rhetorical use of exclusively "Loo-Wit" suggest both a rejection of the imposed name by settlers and reclamation of Indigenous bodies, stories, and lands. But her inclusion of the footnote leads readers to believe that she is acknowledging that this piece of land has been named, has been colonized. She seemingly provides a map for her readers to read this poem as that of a colonized space.

However, this footnote is used as a distraction, a remapping, and a decolonizing of this space. Essentially, Rose creates the rules by which to read her text as she sets the definition for the title of her poem down. And while the footnote is true, it is not the whole truth. As such, Rose breaks her own rules to conceal her narrative in plain sight. Her use of the footnote, leading her readers to Mount St. Helens, leads them to mistake this poem as a lets-preserve nature piece. This footnote then gives some readers a way to interpret this text. For them, "Loo-Wit" begins to exhibit the classic qualities of a pathetic fallacy as nature's anger is exhibited in Loo-Wit's eruption and destruction of the land. Rose's use of the footnote to lead her readers astray is her enactment of mixed-blood rhetorics.

"Loo-Wit" is not only about Mount St. Helens though. In fact, it is also about the abusive exploitation that ties Indigenous women bodies and lands together. It's about the fact that renaming a space has the power to hide the colonial history of the space.

Thus, Rose's use of "Loo-Wit" recognizes the original and true inhabitants whose bodies live and breathe within this land and whose stories include "Loo-Wit" as part of their history. Rose's use of "Loo-Wit" rejects the colonial imposition and marks a recovery process. Rose's use of "Loo-Wit" is a recovery process in regards to not only the land but also the stories of the land and of the people. Thus, reading Rose's poem from these strategic perspectives and heeding Powell's call that to engage mixed-blood rhetorics requires that those "who enact it have an experiential understanding of the cultures/institutions that they propose to transverse" ("Blood and Scholarship..." 10), we are able to read and hear a whole other story that is lost to those only recognizing it as using an ecological trope.

The story of "Loo-Wit" is actually a creation story out of the Pacific Northwest. This version provided by Crow Indian historian Jeanne Eder during the Fifth Women's West Conference explains that:

Tribes from central Oregon to northeastern Washington related traditions about a legendary rock "bridge" that spanned the Columbia River "one sleep" below the site of The Dalles. When it fell, old Indians said to early travelers, its rocks formed the Cascades in the river; its fall, two Indians explained to travelers in 1854, was accompanied by quarrels between Mount Hood and Mount St. Helens, who threw fire at one another. The most familiar version of the myth about the stone arch has been altered so freely that no one now can determine the original tradition, even in the variant written by a Puyallup-Nisqually Indian. The

source of the story given here, Lulu Crandall, seems to have been the one closest to the Klickitats, who had this tradition. Mrs. Crandall, who had known those Indians from her pioneer childhood, was a historian of The Dalles area. (57-58)

According to this version of the story “The Bridge of the Gods,” the Great Spirit had two quarrelling sons determined to be great chiefs and have their own piece of land.

Because the sons could not settle their disputes, the Great Spirit took his two sons high upon a mountain top, asked them each to shoot an arrow in opposite directions, and claim the land upon which the arrow landed as their own (Eder 57-8). The Great Spirit then built a bridge between his two sons’ lands as a sign of peace and as a way for the people to travel back and forth. For some time, the people were peaceful, but too soon began to quarrel. In order to punish them, the Great Spirit kept the sun from shining and the peoples’ days were filled with wintry cold darkness (Eder 57-8). The people prayed for forgiveness and approached an elderly lady Loo-Wit, who had not partaken of the wicked activities. The Great Spirit gave Loo-Wit the fire and said if she took it to the bridge so that all the people would have access to it he would grant her one wish. Loo-Wit agreed. And when she wished to be young and beautiful, her wish was granted.

Soon the sun shone again and the people were warm. Soon too, however, two young men from opposite sides of the bridge became enamored with Loo-Wit and quarreled till their deaths over her. The Great Spirit was really upset, and he broke down the bridge.

The Great Spirit also punished the two young men by transforming them into Mount Hood and Mount Adams and transformed Loo-Wit into Mount St. Helens (Eder 59).

Mount St. Helens as is widely known, still stands, of course, but the name of Loo-Wit

has been almost completely erased. Essentially, in the use of Mount St. Helen, the woman's narrative is erased. Thus, Rose's use of Loo-Wit's name for her poem is a trickster move to reject the imposed representations, reclaim both the Indigenous lands and bodies, elude colonial history, and provide a counter-narrative. Rose's choice of Loo-Wit decenters Western history and places a woman, an Indigenous woman at its center. Additionally, Rose's rhetorical choice of Loo-Wit marks her recognition that at the stake of a colonial process, Indigenous women's bodies, stories, and sexual reproduction are too often the targets of some of the worst forms of abuse and exploitation. My use of trickster rhetorics to respond to Rose's use of trickster rhetorics aids in the recovery of this story, this Indigenous woman's story initiated by Rose's own enactment of trickster rhetorics.

In Rose's poem "Loo-Wit" she demonstrates that as the world continues so does the prolongation of the destructive forces that inhabit it. Along with this destruction though, using trickster rhetorics we find that Rose is actually illustrating the abuse of women and women's bodies. The speaker says:

The way they do
this old woman
no longer cares
what others think
but spits her tobacco
any which way
stretching full length
from her bumpy bed. (51)

From the start of this poem, we recognize a shift in perspective and reality by Rose's use of "The way they do." This line illustrates two perspectives but only reveals one. We, as the reader, will not see "the way they do" whatever it is that is being done. We get to see Loo-Wit's story and that's the only one that matters. Such a choice is significant because women's stories and narratives are typically the first to be subjugated. By stating that we will only hear one side of the story, Rose reveals the artificiality of the authority bestowed on having an omniscient narrator and challenges that capacity of being able to see everyone's reality. Using a mixture of trickster and mixed-blood rhetorics, Rose transgresses these rules and blatantly asserts that the reader will only be provided with one point of view and in this story, she is privileging the Indigenous woman. While this rhetorical choice can certainly be enacted in other forms of literary works, Rose's rejection of the other perspective marks her defiance of the colonial imposition on her words and on this story. Rose's refusal to include the other side of the debate then illustrates her rhetorical choice to control the story that is being told, the way that it is being told, and even who gets to speak in this story.

The multiple threads of readings weave back and forth throughout the text. Loo-Wit the volcano preparing to erupt is also a woman recognizing the long abuse of her body. Loo-Wit is the land and the land is her body. Rose purposely conflates these two ideas to both illustrate the inseparable distinction between women and land but also to show how the abuse of one marks the abuse of the other. Rose's rhetorical conflation between land and body and even spirit enacts a trickster rhetoric aligning herself with other women of color such as Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa's and their revolutionary work in *This Bridge Called My Back* (1981). By purposely rejecting the

separation between multiple ways of interacting and experiencing the world, Rose utilizes this rhetorical conflation to illustrate how Indigenous women's bodies and lands are interdependent—and that the abuse and destruction of one often is tied to the abuse and destruction of the other.

Loo-Wit, bound to earth by “Centuries of Cedar” and “huckleberry ropes,” awakens to the “machinery growls / snarls and ploughs” that reap up “great patches / of her skin” (51). Here again, Loo-Wit is the once fertile land that is overused by farming and other land development, but she also represents Indigenous women, whose bodies have too often been part of the bounty of colonization. The speaker goes on:

She crouches
in the north
her trembling
the source
of dawn. (51-52)

Trembling is often our bodies' biological response to cold and fear. It's the body's way to stabilize itself. Loo-Wit's trembling is her body's response to the destruction around her. By trembling, she becomes the source of dawn. By trembling, she responds to her fears and her body regenerates to bring forth another cycle. As a new day emerges, she moves her arm as the “stones dislodge” (52). From one angle, we see a giant aroused from her sleep, annoyed to have to rise to the chaos upon her; she strikes the destroyers invading her space. From another perspective, we see a woman fighting back. Rose ends this stanza with “it's not as if / they weren't warned” (52). This potentially menacing statement again draws our attention to the first “they” in “The way they do” by

saying “as if/ they weren’t warned.” By doing so, Rose illustrates that she will not provide the other perspective because that’s the only perspective we have ever heard in the literature of dominance.

After the first and very long stanza, there is a long pause, a moment of silence, a moment of clarity and then we see the destruction unfold. This pause is significant because Rose creates silence. In the events unfolding, both within the straight narrative of a volcano that’s erupting and counter-narrative about the rape of a woman as its taking place, she creates silence. Such a pause then marks Rose’s control of that story both in that she is living and/or feeling it as she writing it, but also that she is well aware that she is creating a space. That writing has the power to stop time and create a liminal space, a third space of the decolonial imaginary as discussed in Chapter I. This again is a trickster rhetorical strategy because the moment of silence is filled with words that go unsaid. And we recall that the trickster is always present even in the absence of words. So at this moment, Rose challenges language itself and its ability to truly translate and fully transmit all that the body can feel. How much of what we feel can truly be captured in black ink? How much hate, love, and pain can a word truly hold? How can history therefore really ever capture everything when it is limited to words and when most of what really happens leaves us speechless? And as the poem continues, we get a taste of what is beyond words. Shaken from her sleep by the sound of the boot scraping the “creaking floor” as in a home invasion, hearing and feeling the intruder invade your space, upsetting the balance of the private life, and then the “pull of her the blanket / from her thin shoulder,” as in the first step towards a violation upon women’s bodies (41-46). In a rape, pillage, and plunder of land and bodies, victims are left looking at

their invaded space, an assault on their sense of ownership, privacy, and humanity, almost unable to recognize their belongings and bodies under the print of someone else's hand and foot.

Rose explains how Loo-Wit fights back. The speaker says: "With one free hand / she finds her weapons / and raises them high;" (52). The words here indicate the way women are bound and/or the limited ways in which they are able to fight back as in the indication of "one free hand." Is it perhaps that she has "one free hand" because she has limited resources such as lacking an education, speaking the right language, or lacking monetary funds? Or is it that with the other hand, on her hip, she carries a child? Or can it be that to be able to fight with only "one free hand" is the way it feels to fight two oppressive forces—sexism and colonialism? Regardless of why Rose feels that she has one free hand, the fact remains that she acquires her weapons, which is arguably her voice. For she says, that in a potential eruption of both the volcano and song, Loo-Wit:

clearing the twigs

from her throat

she sings, she sings,

shaking the sky

like a blanket about her

Loo-Wit sings and sings and sings! (52)

In the final unbroken line, we recognize both the destruction by Loo-Wit's eruption, but also the living force that will not easily yield. This destruction is symbolic and real, and Loo-Wit is the trickster seeking to bring balance to her world. While the spewing hot lava will engulf everything in its path, its destruction will pave the way for the land to

self regenerate. Thus, by erupting Loo-Wit creates life. Equally, Loo-Wit's singing invokes images of life. Silenced, bound and oppressed, Loo-Wit not only speaks but defiantly sings. In doing so, Rose illustrates that our strongest weapon is not necessarily our physical strength but our voices, stories, and songs. And not necessarily attached to the written word either. And by singing at the end of this poem, Loo-Wit refuses to be silenced anymore. Rose illustrates through her use of trickster rhetorics that the refusal to be silenced is tied to the refusal to be bound by rules on how to tell one's story. And in so doing, Rose exemplifies trickster rhetorics of survivance.

In "Loo-Wit" Rose challenges the construction of ecological narratives and the stories of Indigenous bodies' eternal and literal connection to "nature." By providing the footnote in the beginning of the poem, she purposely leads her readers astray. And while the footnote does provide a "good read," it largely adheres to the expectations and standards of what stories an Indigenous woman is allowed to tell, largely about let's-
preserve-the-land and other ecological tropes. However, "Loo-Wit" is about the ongoing destruction of women's bodies, of the fact that the destruction of land goes hand and in hand with the destruction of women. This is not using an ecological trope or a metaphor. As previously discussed, scholars like Smith and Powell, among many others, demonstrate that the way to clear the land, the way to empty the land of Indigenous bodies and make space for white bodies is not only a literal clearing of the land but a removal by any means necessary of Indigenous peoples. Children are a threat because they illustrate the future of a people. Women are a particular threat as well because of their capacity to bear children, to create more bodies that must be cleared. As such, the clearing of the land typically involves the murder of children, women, and

men. And for those women that are allowed to survive, the forced sterilization of women ensures the end of a people. Thus, Rose confronts this history, thinly veiling it by her footnote, and asserts that despite these ongoing campaigns against Indigenous women and lands, that women survive and sing and in doing so create life.

In another of Rose's poems within *The Halfbreed Chronicles* entitled "Throat Song: The Whirling Earth," she illustrates how a tradition and a way of understanding Indigenous lands and bodies draw upon an inherent communication between land and women. She begins the poem though with this brief preface:

Eskimo throat-singers imitate the sound the women hear...listening to the sound of wind going through the cracks of an igloo...the sound of the sea shore, a river of geese, the sound of the northern lights while the lights are coming closer...in the old days the people used to think the world was flat, but when they learned the world was turning, they made a throat-singing song about it.

—*Inuktitut Magazine*, December 1980 [Rose's italics]. (53)

Rose's use of this preface to begin her poem is significant because not only does it closely resemble an origin story in that it follows in the tradition of explaining how the world works but it also recalls an oral tradition. By doing so, a likely reading of the text is one in which the poem suggests that nature is alive and responsive to our human needs. But this reading sets the pattern of where nature is here to serve and provide for humanity, rather than a realization that there is a co-existence relationship between humanity and nature. This is a problematic notion for Indigenous feminist practices because the separation of land and bodies sets the pattern for so much of the destruction

that has and continues to occur. As such, Rose's use of this preface is her enactment of mixed-blood rhetorics within this poem. She is setting a pattern for how to read this story but subverts this reading by instead advocating for recognition of the constant synchronization of Indigenous women's bodies, lands, and stories.

By utilizing trickster rhetorics, the embedded stories of Indigenous women's embodied practices of throat singing go unnoticed. And by remaining oblivious to this practice, readers fail to recognize the connection Rose draws between nature, women and motherhood, as beings that sing and create life. The most obvious reading of this poem is that of humanity's dependence on nature, as previously discussed. Throat singing as it is practiced among the Inuit people is a musical performance that was primarily used by the women as a competitive game. The arrival of Christianity during colonization banned this practice for almost 100 years, but in the last 20-30 years there has been an active reemergence of throat singing. Inuit throat-singing consists of:

Two women face each other; they may be standing or crouching down; one is leading, while the other responds; the leader produces a short rhythmic motif, that she repeats with a short silent gap in-between, while the other is rhythmically filling in the gaps. The game is such that both singers try to show their vocal abilities in competition, by exchanging these vocal motives. The first to run out of breath or be unable to maintain the pace of the other singer will start to laugh or simply stop and will thus lose the game. It generally lasts between one and three minutes. ("Inuit Throat-Singing" np).

The practice of throat singing, the coming together of two women in a space that is created by their bodies encapsulates them both at least temporarily in this time in this liminal space. The performance of throat singing, their engagement with each other's inner voices and intimate bodies' rhythms allows them to connect to one another to the point that their hearts start beating on the same beat. This synchronization of body, mind, voice, and spirit is telling of the connections that can exist between Indigenous women and challenges notions of the separation of the body and the spirit. Furthermore, this synchronization is applicable to not only the women but the natural beating and breathing of the land. Essentially, we must recognize that the embodied performance of the throat song can be not only between two women, but between women and the land.

As such, Rose's poem becomes a call and response performance between a woman and the land. It's worth noting here too that the act of singing is an act of creating life such as storytelling and singing is seen as a way for Indigenous peoples to enact survivance. Rose begins with, "I always knew you were singing!" (53.1); which marks both her recognition of the mutual exchange and interdependence between women and nature but also the active resistance and the reclamation in the power of storytelling. She goes on:

As my fingers have pulled your clay,
as your mountains have pulled the clay of me
as my knees have deeply printed your mud,
as your winds have drawn me down and dried the mud of me. (53)

The speaker recalls harvesting the land for nourishment demonstrating a return to earth and a regeneration and rebirth of both humanity and nature. The interdependent cycle of

life between humanity and nature is at the core of the understanding exemplified in this poem. Within these lines, we see the back and forth relationship between the female speaker and the land suggesting perhaps that the interdependency pervades their mutual survival—as I sow upon your body, I am sowed by you. Additionally, though, Rose’s use of this back-and-forth-play between the woman and the earth resembles that of a call and response scenario and again draws our attention to the role of oral storytelling as a means of survival. Essentially, Rose illustrates that the physical coexistence between women and nature goes hand in hand with the codependence of bodies and voices.

The connection between women’s bodies, nature, and stories reveals an understanding of the “natural” and “unnatural” changes occurring. The speaker recognizes the movement around her:

the drone and scrape of stone,
small movements atom by atom I heard like tiny drums
I heard flutes and reeds that whine in the wind,
the bongo scratch of beetles in redwood bark,
the constant rattle that made
of this land a great gourd! (53)

The images Rose uses here draw complex readings connecting women’s wombs with the land. While “the drone and scrape of stone” invoke images of a failed delivery or of an abortion, as the womb is sometimes scraped to ensure the complete removal of a fetus, the “small movements...like tiny drums” sounds similar to that of a small heartbeat. The interplay between the “unnatural”—the scraping the womb—and “natural”—the regular heart beat—within women’s bodies parallel’s the use and misuse of the land. This

image is again apparent in the final line above suggesting that the land is “a great gourd”. As the hard-skinned fruit whose shell like casings have been used for bowls and cups, the linking of wombs to the “natural” and “unnatural” uses of land as vessels that we feed from suggests that the abuse of bodies and lands go hand in hand. From one perspective, Rose is certainly talking about the abuse of women’s bodies, even alluding to the abuse of women’s reproductive rights. But Rose’s correlation of the womb and the land suggests that she is challenging the way in which women can be abused and how their power, control, and agency over their bodies and the spaces they inhabit are denied in theory and in history. The connection between women and nature, the ability to hear and feel the sounds and movements of each other, allows a special type of understanding of both the pain of birth and death, a symbiotic relationship between two forces continually bringing life and accepting death as a part of their existence.

Rose illustrates the importance of listening to the forces working beneath the surface of reality. Nature, the cycle of life, is the trickster. It is by the death and regeneration and rebirth that the trickster creates balance. While death and the destruction of nature create havoc and disorder, as Loo-Wit’s eruption illustrates, the trickster emerges as a living force breathing life into existence and bridging the space between death and birth. This oscillating relationship witnesses the death of the world to renew life by the act of singing and breathing. And in the last line of the poem, the speaker solidifies her understanding of this symbiotic relationship with nature and the power within her gender as she says, “O I always knew you were singing!” (53). In this final image, we again infer a living force dwelling not on death and destruction but in its power to recreate life. Within this poem, Rose solidifies the relationship between

Indigenous women, lands, and even stories. Their survival is codependent and thus her use of trickster rhetorics to protect and ensure her story is heard is an act of survivance: a survivance of stories, women, and lands.

Conclusion

We survive war and conquest; we survive colonization, acculturation, assimilation; we survive beating, rape, starvation, mutilation, sterilization, abandonment, neglect, death of our children, our loved ones, destruction of our land, our homes, our past, and our future. We survive, and we do more than just survive. We bond, we care, we fight, we teach, we nurse, we bear, we feed, we earn, we laugh, we love, we hang in there, no matter what.

—Paula Gunn Allen “Angry Women are Building”

The Sacred Hoop (190)

As Paula Gunn Allen explains above, women are fighters and survivors. Wave after wave of genocidal attacks upon women’s bodies, the spaces they inhabit, and the stories they tell have detrimental effects, but they’ve survived. Despite it all, they’ve survived. This is precisely where Rose picks up the narrative. Veiling her story within ecological tropes, for example, allow her stories to be read. However, her stories are about so much more. Rose confronts the destruction of women’s bodies, the clearing and poisoning of the land, and the erase of their stories. Rose asserts that the destruction of one is the destruction of the other. Furthermore, Rose challenges the construction of labels used to colonize and confine and utilizes these moments to build cross cultural alliances. She create a politic and rhetoric of resistance and defiance to create alliances and

communities. Through her use of trickster and mixed-blood rhetorics, Rose tells survivance stories. And in doing so, Rose privileges Indigenous women's stories and centers the discussion on reclamation of Indigenous women's bodies, lands, and stories.

In my first chapter, "Decolonizing the Academy: Using the Rhetorical Borders of Rhetorics and Literatures of Color to Build Alliances," I argued that the academy still perpetuates the colonial and imperialist traditions from which it was first instituted. Following such practices have created internalized racist and sexist hierarchies that only serve to oppress the works by people of color. As such, I argued that building interdisciplinary alliances between the rhetorics and poetics in conjunction with cross cultural alliances allows us to begin to dismantle the colonialist and imperialist hierarchies within academia. In this chapter, I assert that building such alliances allows us to hear the marginalized stories by people of color and to build allied communities within our fields and provide the methodology for the building of these interdisciplinary and cross-cultural alliances. In my next chapter, "American Indian Rhetorics of Silence and Recovery: Enacting Rhetorics of Survivance in 19th Century European American Literature," I utilize a significant amount of the theoretical background set up in this chapter—trickster rhetorics, mixed-blood rhetorics, survivance, and relationship between racist and colonialist practices—to juxtapose Leslie Marmon Silko's "A Geronimo Story" with Henry David Thoreau's "The Allegash and East Branch." I bring these works together not to build alliances between Silko and Thoreau but between Silko's Laguna Pueblo characters and Thoreau's Penobscot guide Joseph Polis. Doing so allows us to not only recover Polis' story from Thoreau's text but it also allows us to

demonstrate how alliances can be created across time and space using rhetorics of survivance.

CHAPTER III

**AMERICAN INDIAN RHETORICS OF SILENCE AND RECOVERY:
ENACTING RHETORICS OF SURVIVANCE IN 19TH CENTURY EUROPEAN
AMERICAN LITERATURE**

The storyteller keeps the stories

all the escape stories

she says “With these stories of ours

we can escape almost anything

with these stories we will survive.”

—Leslie Marmon Silko

“The Storytellers Escape” (247)

Introduction

In “Discovering Nature in North America,” Richard White explains that “Americans are constantly discovering nature, and through it, so they think, themselves” (874). Additionally, today and in the times of Thoreau, the “wilderness” and Indigenous people are consistently rhetorically constructed as “vanishing.” While avid nature readers of Henry David Thoreau’s “The Allegash and East Branch” from *The Maine Woods* are struck by his attentive description and detailed listing of the unknown flowers he collects on his excursion, the truth is that Thoreau also attempts to capture and collect Joseph Polis’ story and utilize him as the human representative of the American “wilderness.” Joseph Polis of the Penobscot Nation served as Thoreau’s guide through

the Maine Woods. And while Thoreau attempts to caricature and ridicule Polis within his journal entries, the truth is that Polis “was not only literate but had brought Penobscot politics to Augusta and Washington and had traveled to New York and Boston” (Brooks 248). This is not the Polis that Thoreau recreates for his readers though. In Thoreau’s journal entries, Polis is rhetorically constructed within the backdrop of the setting. Thoreau attempts to catalogue and possess Polis within his text, to claim him as part of his exploration and colonization of the Maine Woods. However, despite Thoreau’s storytelling, Polis embarks on this journey in order to both protect his people, his land, and to tell his own story.

Nearly 120 years after the publication of *The Maine Woods*, Laguna Pueblo writer Leslie Marmon Silko presents “A Geronimo Story” in *Storyteller* that thematically resembles Thoreau’s journal entries. In her story, her Laguna characters are hired by the white army to track down Chiricahua Apache Leader Geronimo, who has been allegedly attacking white settlements. Siteye, her protagonist and the guide through the story, is defiant of the white army’s encroachment on their lands, lives, and of their pursuit of Geronimo. And whereas Thoreau’s story and excursion is too dangerously focused on observing, confining, and cataloging of nature and Indigenous people, Silko demonstrates that the journey and storytelling are the goal for her Laguna characters rather than the capture of Geronimo that the white army pursues.

Juxtaposing Silko’s storytelling as a rhetorical structure exemplified in her short story “A Geronimo Story” to Thoreau’s “The Allegash and East Branch” demonstrates his and largely European Americans colonizing understanding not only of the land, journey, and stories, but also of Indigenous people. However, unknown to Thoreau is a

warfare of silence and recovery Silko and his own character, Polis, rhetorically engage and is demonstrated by the white men's futile attempts to capture a notion of the "American wilderness." As such, one of the goals of this chapter is to work from within the third space, the decolonial imaginary, presented in Chapter I to investigate both the silences and absences, of words and individuals, in the narratives to show that Siteye's and Polis' gaps and omissions tell a different and more significant account.

Additionally, by building rhetorical alliances between Indigenous groups within North America, Polis' (Penobscot) and Siteye's (Laguna Pueblo) stories exemplify their strategies of survivance to ensure the survival of their stories and the survival of their people.

In the previous chapter "Reclaiming Bodies, Spaces, and Stories: Trickster Rhetorics in Wendy Rose's *The Halfbreed Chronicles*," I argued that rhetorical alliances are necessary in the face of ongoing colonial tactics that systematically aid in the simultaneous destruction of Indigenous lands and women's bodies. Additionally, utilizing Wendy Rose's *The Halfbreed Chronicles*, I argued that we need to build stronger alliances between women of color and challenge the rhetorical boundaries in the discourse that prevent our stories from being heard. In this chapter, I again argue for rhetorical alliances across Indigenous time and space through the use of a particular decolonial hermeneutic. I argue that by rhetorically stacking and transitioning between these two narratives—Thoreau's and Silko's—we are able to recover a retelling of Joseph Polis' story which makes this both an act of recovery and an act of resistance. These alliances across time and spaces are part of the storytelling methodology in "A Geronimo Story." Throughout the text, Silko makes references and utilizes stories from

not only the Laguna and Apache Nations but also the Acoma, Hopi, Navajo, Crow, Arapaho, and Sioux Peoples. By doing so, Silko begins to pave the way for alliances among multiple Indigenous Nations. She does so not to essentialize all Indigenous people but to create an Indigenous rhetorical alliance in this story where we are to hear, honor, and respect the multiple stories that all these groups bring and that defy the colonial imposition of storytelling practices on Indigenous bodies, spaces, and stories. So while her characters are Laguna Pueblo, they help protect the Chiricahua Apache leader Geronimo and his men, and she utilizes multiple stories from various Indigenous Nations as a form of survivance against the colonizing practices being carried out across time and space on Indigenous peoples, lands, and stories. And so by building a rhetorical alliance between Polis and Siteye, we ensure their mutual survival and survival of their narratives. Furthermore, the interplay between rhetorical alliances and spaces of marked rhetorical silences, the complete absence of words, are acts of survivance. They are rejections of continued colonial impositions and sources of resistance and defiance. By enacting survivance within their narratives, we are able to hear a whole other story that defies colonial history's attempted erasure.

Storytelling Practices: Acts of Survivance

Addressing questions that might arise as to how or why an American Indian story can speak for and/or rewrite a text published more than 120 years before by a European American, transcendental writer calls for a broad view of the plots, characters, and themes of both Thoreau's "The Allegash and East Branch" and Silko's "A Geronimo Story." On a very basic level, both stories are about a white man seeking the aid of an

American Indian in an excursion or attempt to experience, capture, and/or control something beyond their capacity or understanding. In Thoreau's story, he is the narrator and protagonist; Silko's story is narrated by Andy, a young Laguna. While both stories are essentially about a journey, the path, purpose, and goal of the excursions differ quite significantly. The journey for Thoreau represents a discovery and ultimate possession of nature, of the American "wilderness": collecting flower specimens in his book and experiencing and documenting an Indigenous man. The journey within Silko's story is the white army's use of the Laguna men in the pursuit of Geronimo and his Apache men.

Because both "The Allegash and East Branch" and "A Geronimo Story" are a part of larger works, *The Maine Woods* and *Storyteller*, which are considered as autobiographical, it is important to recognize the differences in structure and also in the conscious possession of the story. Thoreau uses his excursion among the Penobscot nation for his own "extended biographical" attempt to create a distinctly American understanding of life outside of the European mindset in his journal entries (Gura 367). Essentially, Thoreau uses the Penobscot people as his "humanized landscape," to borrow Richard White's phrase, as the backdrop of his autobiography. Indigenous people are not human in Thoreau's world; Indigenous people are hardly real in Thoreau's imagination (Thoreau 195). Throughout the text Thoreau names and lists all the flowers which he begins to possess. And while his work uncovering possibly new plants can and is helpful to building of knowledge about the land, one must question why he regards the flowers with more respect than he shows to Polis referring to him as superstitious (196), infantile (198), and animalistic (205).

And despite Thoreau's efforts throughout the text that serve to ridicule, consume and appropriate Indigeneity into his journal entries, Polis does engage his own storytelling practices, those of the Penobscot People and Wabanaki Confederacy.

Annette Kolodny explains that in Wabanaki and Penobscot storytelling practices:

the storyteller's craft demands a certain level of narrative coherence, interesting content, and above all, relevance to present circumstances and to the audience(s) being addressed. When retelling one or more old traditional stories...the old storytellers were authorized (indeed expected) to transfer elements from one story cycle to another and/or to reorganize elements in a story so as to emphasize some particular aspect of that story for the present moment and audience (76).

Furthermore, Kolodny explains that the "[i]n oral transmission, of course, the speaker could expect frequent interruptions, as his listeners offered various utterances of interest, laughed, or exclaimed. In oral transmission, also, any ambiguities would have been clarified by means of the speaker's gestures, facial expressions, vocal pitch, or emphasis" (78). Throughout Thoreau's and Polis' journey, Polis is consistently telling him stories that connect the physical spaces they are traveling through with the Penobscot stories. And, as will be discussed, the various moments in which Thoreau ridicules Polis' storytelling practices, he is instead misinterpreting the event all together—because within Penobscot storytelling traditions there is more of an expectation of audience participation in the storytelling process. Additionally, noting these Penobscot storytelling practices and oral traditions allow us to decipher Polis' story from Thoreau's text because we can recognize the particular rhetorical maneuvers

being made. And while Thoreau is completely dismissive, we can certainly learn a lot from listening to the spaces in which Polis' story emerges.

Silko's "A Geronimo Story" is a part of *Storyteller*, a larger semi-autobiographical text that blends history, poetry, photographs, and stories. Robert M. Nelson explains that Silko's writing is shaped "in nearly equal measure by the land and by the variety of oral and written storytelling performances that were a part of her life growing up at Laguna Pueblo" (245). Nelson asserts that the "Laguna have always been one of the most adaptive pueblo communities in the Southwest, and many of the stories comprising Laguna oral tradition preserve the complex strategies of resistance and assimilation that have enabled the people to survive and adjust to myriad external pressures" (245). As such, Nelson contends that Silko's work "celebrates the transformative power of story and place, working together for life in a healing way" (245). Susan Brill de Ramirez describes Silko's structure in *Storyteller* as an oral storytelling experience in which she transforms "the literary into a written form of the oral" (339). Additionally, Bernard A. Hirsh argues that Silko teaches her characters and readers through a storytelling tradition based on accretion, on the gradual accumulation of stories of the past to reveal the present reality and of the future stories yet to come (3). By understanding the past, Hirsh suggests, the individual understands his or her place now and the future journey lying ahead (3).

Lastly, Arnold Krupat argues that to treat *Storyteller* as an autobiography is a Western perspective and a mistake because, he says, Native writers are not "as concerned about keeping fiction and fact or poetry and prose distinct from one another," and the blurring of the line between these genre's has always been an aspect of

American Indian literatures (59). Additionally, Malea Powell, in “Listening to Ghosts” reminds us that “the only difference between a history, a theory, a poem, an essay, is the one that we have ourselves imposed” (15). This is significant because the hierarchy of knowledges and stories can have a detrimental impact on the stories that are not being told. Silko’s weaving of multiple forms of storytelling defies the standardization of stories. And, it is precisely because of Silko’s Laguna oral storytelling practices presented textually, aiding the process of healing, utilizing multiple threads of discourse to pervade her narrative, and reaching out to multiple Indigenous nations in her text that facilitate the enactment of survivance. Additionally, it is within this practice that the juxtaposition of stories facilitates for the recovery of Polis’ narrative.

This process of building stories, of blending genres, of allowing multiple textual and non-textual materials to speak to each other in order to create knowledge and more stories—stories that ensure the continuation and survival of Indigenous peoples—are practices of survivance.¹⁴ In “Aesthetics of Survivance,” Gerald Vizenor defines survivance as “an active sense of presence over absence, deracination, and oblivion; survivance is the continuance of stories, not a mere reaction, however pertinent.survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, detractions, obtrusions, the unbearable sentiments of tragedy, and the legacy of victimry” (1). Malea Powell adds that by utilizing the “language of survivance (survival + resistance)” Indigenous authors can “reimagine and, literally, re-figure ‘the Indian.’ It is this use that I argue transforms their object-status within colonial discourse into a subject-status, a presence instead of an absence” (“Rhetorics of Survivance...” 400). This is precisely the discourse both Polis

¹⁴ A more thorough discussion of the rhetorics of survivance is provided in Chapter II.

and Siteye engage. And by utilizing Silko's rhetorical storytelling structure—knowledge accretion by building on stories, challenging the limits of storytelling practices, and the transformation of the written into the oral—we are able to draw rhetorical alliances between Polis' and Siteye's narrative that allows the recovery of Polis' story despite Thoreau's efforts to suppress it and even colonize it. Additionally, juxtaposing Polis' and Siteye's narrative allows us to see and hear their strategies of resistance and defiance exhibited through their use of survivance.

The enactment of survivance, the presence over absence takes place when we can find ways for stories to transcend time, space, and bodies, when we can find ways for stories to continue beyond their initial transmission or delivery. Lisa Brooks explains in *The Common Pot* that for her ancestors the Abenaki in the northeast, awikhigan is “a tool for image making, for writing, for transmitting an image or idea from one mind to another, over waterways, over time” (xxii). Furthermore, Brooks explains that:

[i]t is a map of a network of writers and text, as well as a process of mapping the historical space they inhabit. It is a mapping of how Native people in the northeast used writing as an instrument to reclaim lands and reconstruct communities, but also a mapping of the *instrumental* activity of writing, its role in the remembering of a fragmented world (xxii).

Both Polis and Siteye need to transmit their stories. By telling stories Siteye is able to get Andy to recognize his role in the journey, the need to remember relationships and kinships, the need to honor their stories and the land they share, and the need to engage in storytelling practices as acts of survivance. By telling stories Siteye protects Andy, his Laguna people, the Apaches, the land, and the stories too. Similarly, by telling

stories, Polis is able to protect his people and the land. Because his story is not presented immediately to his people but has to be sifted through Thoreau's journal entries, Polis utilizes practices such as awikhigan in which he recognizes that for him to transmit his story beyond the text and time frame, for him to enact acts of survivance, he has to engage various rhetorical practices that will facilitate the delivery to transcend time, space, and Thoreau.

The Rhetorics of Empire within Travel and Nature Writing

By the mid 1800s, nature writers like Thoreau were increasingly escaping to the landscapes of the United States, hoping to capture a fraction of this "frontier" as their own. In fact, Richard White argues that by the 18th and 19th century, "the discoverer, once supreme, became no more than an adventurous collector. Representative samples of nature had to be preserved, carried back, catalogued, and later photographed for the museum-based expert" (884). For Thoreau nature is an object, possibly a great object, a valuable possession, but no more than an "it." Nature, for European Americans, is a possession, a fading commodity, and an expiring novelty to protect and preserve. For Indigenous peoples though, as Allen explains, "the earth is not a mere source of survival, distant from the creatures it nurtures and from the spirit that breathes in us, nor is it to be considered an inert resource on which we draw in order to keep our ideological self functioning, whether we perceive that self in sociological or personal terms" (119). The earth is not simply a limited resource or something outside of human's experience or a type of god to be worshiped. The earth, the land, nature is alive. It breathes; it lives. How does one possess and preserve something that is alive? How does one collect and

catalogue and therefore confine and limit something that is alive? How does one keep something and someone that is alive from changing?

But authors like Thoreau flock to find the “wilderness,” to rediscover themselves, to witness the “natural” world in all its grandeur. Ning Yu explains that Thoreau desires a firsthand experience with nature in order “to attain and represent a transcendental vision of the ideal interrelation between humankind and the natural environment” (307). Thoreau certainly creates this transcendental vision in *Walden* and *The Maine Woods*. He wants Americans to step out of the suburbs and cities and to see the “wilderness” of America. He also wants Americans to have a kind transcendental moment with nature, to perhaps achieve a deeper awareness of their humanity, of their human nature by distancing themselves from industrialization and capitalism.

Such an understanding of nature is always erasing the people that inhabit these “natural” spaces because such a view requires the lack of humanity. Joe Watkins explains that the “transient nature of Americans” compels them to rediscover nature in part because non-Indian cultures do not have a connection to a place since they have to trace their lineage and people to a country they no longer inhabit or have a stake in (Watkins 42). This, of course, is a problem and their lack of connection leads to a commodification of these spaces. He says, “we must question the propensity of modern cultures to commodify the landscape. The ‘public spaces’ of the United States in many instances were carved out of ‘native places,’ physical areas that were of such importance to tribes that possession seemed unthinkable” (Watkins 44). In “The Allegash and East Branch” Thoreau begins exemplifying the process of possessing nature, of possessing it by the power bestowed on his writing. And within this process, Thoreau begins to also

carve out public spaces upon Indigenous stories and bodies. By writing about these spaces and either avoiding or neglecting to acknowledge those that inhabit these spaces, Thoreau creates a literature of erasure.

Thoreau's work follows a writing tradition based on romanticizing, appropriating, consuming, and erasing Indigenous bodies through perceived "natural" spaces for a distant readership. In fact in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Mary Louise Pratt reminds us that "travel books written by Europeans about non-European parts of the world created the imperial order for Europeans 'at home' and gave them their place in it" (3). The readers of these travel books were given "a sense of ownership, entitlement and familiarity with respect to the distant parts of the world that were being explored, invaded, contested, invested in, and colonized" (Ibid). These writings were expected to rhetorically construct their destinations in such a fashion so that they enticed readers to continue to read and/or to travel to these places, "verified" the emptiness so readers felt the need to occupy these spaces, and ultimately began the process of creating a new history.

The rhetorical constructions of these travel books such as Thoreau's journal entries through the Maine Woods are dependent on what David Spurr discusses in his book *The Rhetoric of Empire*. Spurr suggests that a significant aspect of the rhetoric of empire is the colonial gaze that not only presumes ownership upon all it witnesses but also that those that are "gazed upon...are denied the power of the gaze; spoken to, they are denied the power to speak freely" (13). Essentially, the journalist, the writer, the surveyor by gazing upon a space begins to possess it and those individuals who are in this space are subject to the same objectification process. In the process of writing about

lands and peoples, they are silenced; they are catalogued; and they are possessed and consumed. Furthermore, Spurr contends that:

The bodies, not only of so-called primitive peoples but of all the colonized, have been a focal point of colonialist interest which, as in the case of landscape description, proceeds from the visual to various kinds of valorization: the material value of the body as labor supply, its aesthetic value as artistic representation, its ethical value as a mark of innocence or degradation, its scientific value as evidence of racial difference or inferiority, its humanitarian value as the sign of suffering, its erotic value as the object of desire (Spurr 22).

Through a series of rhetorical constructions and definitions the bodies that exist within these spaces are categorized and utilized to describe and represent the landscape itself. The bodies cease to be individuals, cease to have stories, or families. These bodies become props on the stages of these colonial descriptions of “natural” and available landscapes.

These bodies are utilized to construct a colonial discourse that “naturalizes the process of domination: it finds a natural justification for the conquest of nature and of primitive peoples, those ‘children of nature’” (Spurr 156). Furthermore, “Colonial discourse may be said to naturalize in both of these senses: while it identifies a colonized or primitive people as part of the natural world, it also presents this identification as entirely ‘natural,’ as a simple state of what is, rather than as a theory based an interest” (157). By making these spaces and all the bodies that inhabit it as part of the “natural,” they become less than human. The romanticized conceptualization of the “natural”

presumes that the bodies and spaces exist on a different understanding of humanity and such idealizations are dangerous for Indigenous people.

In the European American literature of the 1800s such as in the work of Thoreau, these spaces' and bodies' capacity to be understood as "natural" allows for their very consumption, appropriation, and destruction. For example, in *Muting White Noise* James H. Cox asserts that in European American literatures documenting their journeying through these spaces "contributed to the colonial effort by obscuring violence committed against Native people, disguising the motives for that violence, relieving their readers of responsibility for that violence and domination, and affirming their view of Native people as on the verge of absence" (248). Thus, Cox asserts that regardless of the European American authors' response to the violence perpetuated, the end of their narratives always concludes with the disappearance of Indigenous communities (249).

Operating within the function of travel books and utilizing rhetorics of empire, Thoreau's text can be potentially dangerous for all those that are contained within it and must be countered with rhetorics of survivance. Cox explains that travel books are "acts of domination: they prepare the way for the advance of European American empire by imagining a landscape clear of Native Americans" (206). These texts of domination must be countered by practicing of survivance (survival + resistance), which is a means by which to survive and resist the colonial encroachments upon bodies, lands, and stories. Additionally, survivance asserts a different power relationship between peoples, lands, and stories. In fact, Cox explains that according to Vizenor "many Native writers focus on survivance—survival plus resistance—rather than domination" (205). Lee Schweninger also explains that because American Indians approach nature as a process

of “sharing rather than dominating,” which is more readily seen in European Americans’ texts and narratives, they do not believe in a “wilderness/civilization” dichotomy (48-9). The dichotomizing of “wilderness” and “civilization” essentially separates and subdues the former. In the subjugation of “wilderness,” “civilization” and the “civilized” European Americans become the dominating force. Domination, as Schweninger explains, is not a lens by which American Indians understand nature. There is a “[f]usion of...humans and nonhuman nature” and a “sincere appreciation of land, air, water, and the interconnectedness of all animals” in the view of nature (Schweninger 48). Additionally, as Paula Gunn Allen explains, “We are the land. To the best of my understanding, that is the fundamental idea that permeates American Indian life; the land (Mother) and the people (mothers) are the same” (119). Whether or not American Indians write about nature, Allen asserts that among American Indians there is a better understanding of the relationship and responsibility that resides between peoples and lands.

Within the practice of survivance the significance of such relationships between lands and bodies recognizes the need for a politic of co-existence. In *Muting White Noise*, Cox asserts that as:

King, Vizenor, and Alexie suggest...that domination of the land and people is a prevailing community value in non-Native storytelling traditions. These traditions, in turn, dominate the imaginations of those familiar with them. Vizenor also suggests that people who consistently imagine their relationship to the world in terms of violence and domination will be destroyed by that violence (204-205).

The symbiotic relationship between lands and bodies is recognized as part of our daily material existence. As such the process of conquering, dominating, and destroying lands and bodies with the same weapon is a practice in full operation within a European American perspective. And for writers like Thoreau and for his readers, such a lack of understanding of this relationship proves to be detrimental to Indigenous Peoples around the world. Practicing survivance then presumes this dominating mentally but also recognizes the need to counter these narratives through the practice of survivance via storytelling.

Storytelling Practices of Survivance

While Thoreau must use maps to explore the American landscape, Polis' and Siteye's familiarity with the land allow their stories and traditions to be their guide and their eyes. In fact both Polis and Siteye rely on their Indigenous stories and oral traditions to travel the land without a map. Louis Owens explains that "[m]apping is, of course, an intensely political enterprise, an essential step toward appropriation and possession. Maps write the conquerors' stories over the stories of the conquered" (211). The stories of the conquered, the stories Polis and Siteye can tell cover and see the land in ways maps destroy, close-off, and label. Thoreau asks Polis how he can find his way around without a map; Polis responds, "'Sometimes I lookum side-hill,' and he glanced toward a high hill or mountain on the eastern shore, 'great difference between the north and south, see where the sun has shone most. So trees, —the large limbs bend toward south. Sometimes I lookum lock' (rocks)'" (204). The land itself is the guide for Polis. And while Thoreau appears to recognize that Polis "does not carry things in his head,

nor remember the route exactly, like a white man, but relies on himself at the moment,” he is also suggesting that Polis does not have knowledge or intelligence of a man but more of an animal (205). For example, he says, “he found his way very much as an animal does” (205). Polis’ use of the land and stories to guide him through this journey confounds Thoreau, who relies on maps. But Polis’ use of land and stories work to un-map this space. In *The Common Pot* Lisa Brooks explains: “Deloria argued that creation stories are actually much more concerned with geography and spatiality, ‘what happened here,’ than with chronological origins and temporality, ‘what happened then’” (xxiii). In fact, Vine Deloria explains in *God is Red* that:

Indian tribes combine history and geography so that they have a “sacred geography,” that is to say, every location within their original homeland has a multitude of stories that recount the migrations, revelations, and particularly historical incidents that cumulatively produced the tribe in its current condition...the most notable characteristic of the tribal traditions is the precision and specificity of the traditions when linked to landscape (121).

Thus, Polis’ use of the land and stories as his guides are connected to a different understanding and relationship. It baffles Thoreau because for him the land is a commodity waiting to be claimed and consumed, and the stories are of no importance. For Polis, the land is rich with the stories of his people; it provides the means by which to un-map the colonial presence within these spaces; it is a living breathing text that conveys stories that are incapable of being written, contained, commodified, or consumed.

In *Storyteller*, Siteye also uses both his senses and his memory to draw within his nephew Andy's imagination: "I've only been this way once before. When I was a boy. Younger than you. But in my head, when I close my eyes, I can still see the trees and the boulders and the way the trail goes. Sometimes I don't remember the distance—things get closer or farther than I remembered them, but the direction is right" (218).

Andy also recalls that his father had taught him:

to remember the way: to remember how the trees look—dead branches or crooked limbs; to look for big rocks and to remember their shape and their color; and if there aren't big rocks, then little ones with pale-green lichens growing on them. To know the trees and rocks all together with the mountains and sky and wildflowers (218).

Both in the absence of sight and in the absence of words, the knowledge that Siteye and his father give Andy are both to help him remember the past and to remember the way back home. They are not attempting to draw a map for Andy with a preset route but teach him that the way exists in his mind, and all that he has to do to find his way back is to remember the journey.

In addition to teaching Andy to remember the land and memorize the journey, Siteye also teaches him survival mechanisms. While on the journey, Andy, noticing the "lava flow [that] stretches for miles north to south; and the distance from east to west is difficult to see," explains that "[t]he Navajos believe that the lava is a great pool of blood from a dangerous giant whom the Twin Brothers killed a long time ago" (217). While Andy does not say who told him this story, the image Silko conveys is that the story is tied to the land. The sight of the lava flow brings the story forward in Andy's memory.

It is also worth noting that the story is from the Navajo people. Because as previously noted, throughout the “A Geronimo Story,” Silko references the Laguna, Apache, Acoma, Hopi, Navajo, Crow, Arapaho, and Sioux Nations. She does this to draw connections and alliances between all these different groups. To show that this rhetorical warfare is not exclusive to one group, and that this Indigenous understanding is not exclusive to one group. Furthermore, through her characters, Siteye and Captain Pratt, she also demonstrates how alliances can be and should be built between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and that our mutual survivals are dependent on the multiple forms of alliances we can build.

Additionally, Siteye tells Andy, “Our ancestors have places here. In the little caves they left pottery jars full of food and water. These were places to come when somebody was after you. I suppose the water is all gone now, but the corn might still be good” (217). The journey is not just about getting to the destination. The journey is about being alive, surviving, and living. Andy has to learn the way, the journey. He has to know the land to find his way back, to find safety, to find his people. He needs to understand that the land on the maps is not the land in his heart or imagination. The land is not owned and cannot be possessed. Furthermore, as Owens explains, the “future of that wilderness and, of course, the future of all life depends upon whose stories we listen to: the stories that tell us we are bound in a timeless and inextricable relationship with the earth which gives us life and sustains us, or the stories that tell us the earth is a resource to be exploited until it is used up” (211). Andy’s life depends on the stories he listens to. And the fact remains that our existence, our realities as a society of multiple peoples is highly dependent on the stories we hear, value, heed, and retell. Furthermore,

we must recognize that within these verbalized stories, however, there are moments of silence that are rhetorically constructed and utilized as acts of survivance.

Rhetorics of Silence as Survivance

From the start of the journey's narration and the introduction of characters and plots, readers can see both the absence of information in Thoreau's attempt to silence Polis and the careful manipulation of details Silko includes telling a different story. Upon the initiation of Thoreau's story, he seeks a guide from the Penobscot people who are "considered extant as a tribe" (174). But what does it mean for a group of people to be extant, to be *still in existence*? As troubling images of extinct species come to mind, we must recall that researchers estimate that approximately 45 million Indians inhabited America pre-European contact.¹⁵ Thoreau's explanation that the Penobscot are *still in existence* carries problematic genocidal connotations that illustrate that in his imagination and in his reality, Indigenous people have somehow magically disappeared—while they continue to stand in front of him. To leave no doubt of these connotations, Thoreau explains that the Indians "were nearly all gone to the seaboard and to Massachusetts, partly on account of the smallpox—of which they are very much afraid—having broken out in Oldtown" (174). Unfortunately, the murder of so many Indigenous peoples through the use of smallpox is lengthy although not as well discussed by Thoreau. Also interesting to read here though is that he says "*partly* on account of smallpox." Here we see Thoreau skipping over history of these events. He

¹⁵ Paula Gunn Allen says that there is a debate between researchers as to whether there was 45 million or 20 million American Indians pre-European contact. She also explains that the U.S. government only claims about 450,000 ("Angry Women are Building..." 189)

creates a gap in the text that could be because either he presumes his readers know what has been going on or because he does not care to dwell on such murdering campaigns.

Throughout their journeys, Siteye and Polis provide limited and guarded information to the white army and to Thoreau. Siteye, however, because he has his nephew also uses the journey to teach him about the land and their history. While Polis is unable to reach Thoreau, he is successful at getting Thoreau to write down at least portions of his story. Thoreau says:

The Indian sat on the front seat, saying nothing to anybody, with a stolid expression of face, as if barely awake to what was going on. Again I was struck by the peculiar vagueness of his replies when addressed on the stage or at the taverns. He really never said anything on such occasions. He was merely stirred up, like a wild beast, and passively muttered some insignificant response (180).

John S. Pipkin explains that while in most of Thoreau's texts Indigenous people are marginal figures, in "The Allegash and East Branch" he becomes a ventriloquist and uses Polis as his mouth piece (533). Thoreau's explanation of Polis' interaction on the stage or in the taverns exemplifies his dangerously ignorant and blatantly racist views of Polis and of Indigenous people. We also do not know what is being said to or asked of Polis in either of these places. Thoreau is in full control. In the end, Thoreau not only displays his racist views but also becomes participatory in the misrepresentation and dehumanization of Indigenous people.

Despite his reactions in the tavern and stage, Polis does attempt to communicate with Thoreau. Within a few pages, though, Thoreau explains:

[T]he Indian repeated the tradition respecting this mountain's having anciently been a cow moose,—how a mighty Indian hunter, whose name I forget, succeeded in killing this queen of the moose tribe with great difficulty, while her calve was killed somewhere among the islands in Penobscot Bay, and, to his eyes, this mountain had still the form of the moose in a reclining posture, its precipitous side presenting the outline of the head. (190)

Here, Thoreau does not even disguise the fact that he is attempting to take full possession of the story. Thoreau is not seeking to record Polis' story, but like the flowers he is collecting, naming, and claiming, he seeks to take ownership of not necessarily Polis' story, because it is clear he is indifferent to it, but to take ownership of Polis as his embodied representative of the "American Wilderness."

But within Thoreau's capturing of the landscape of the American "wilderness," he inadvertently takes note of Joseph Polis' story. Although fragmented, silenced, berated, and ridiculed by Thoreau, Polis' story survives. For Silko, as well, or rather for Siteye, the journey is a significant way to teach his nephew Andy the journey they have travelled and continue to travel in order to survive—survival through storytelling. In Silko's story, the gaps in information and dialogue and the moments of silences give power to the storytellers—Siteye, Andy, and Silko—and allow Geronimo to survive.

We must recognize, however, that even in the absence of words, or when Polis refuses to speak, there is a rhetoric at work. In *Unspoken: A Rhetoric of Silence*, Cheryl Glenn defines silence as "an absence with a function" (4). Furthermore, she argues that "[silence] is a rhetorical art that can be as powerful as the spoken or written word. Like

speech, the meaning of silence depends on a powerful differential that exists in every rhetorical situation: who can speak, who must remain silent, who listens, and what those listeners can do” (9). In the case of Polis, he is silent in the text but he could also be potentially silenced by Thoreau. In either of these scenarios, the power differentials assert that there are rhetorical gaps created in the texts. Within Polis’ moments of silence, we can assert that he is limiting the information he provides to Thoreau and to strangers, that he prefers to keep information about the land and the people who depend on him to himself. Thoreau grossly misinterprets and misrepresents Polis in animalistic terminology that actually reveals a lot more of Thoreau’s intentions and Polis’ resistance. On the other hand, Thoreau’s gaps in information, in the details he neglects to fill the readers in on or his failure to follow through on his stories about Polis and the Penobscot are also filled with stories.

Silko also utilizes the marked rhetorical spaces of silence to have Siteye both teach his nephew and to defy the white army. Riding past Crow Mesa, Andy inquires about their destination. Siteye explains that they are headed to, “Pie Town, north of Datil. Captain says someone there saw Apaches or something,” and then there is marked silence in the text (214). Why does Silko create silence in her text? Why write silence? Can there be silence in a text without a blank space? She writes: “We rode for a while in silence” (214). There are no physical gaps in the text but only words expressing silence. Silence *is not* silence in this world. Silence is a source of power. Siteye continues:

“But I don’t think Geronimo is there. He’s still at White Mountain.”

“Did you tell Captain?” [Andy asks]

“I told him, and he agrees with me. Geronimo isn’t down there. So we’re

going down.”

“But if you already know that Geronimo isn’t there,” I [Andy] said, “why do you go down there to look for him?”

He just looked at me and smiled (214).

Captain Pratt, we learn later, is married to a Laguna woman, and he is often referred by whites as a “Squaw man” for his preference of Indigenous customs (214-5). The indication in the dialogue above is that the Captain and Siteye understand each other and are conscious of their actions. They are allies and have learned to speak the same discourse of resistance and defiance. Furthermore, this second moment of marked silence is indicative and suggestive of a recognized power in the absence of words. Siteye goes on, “It will be a beautiful journey for you. The mountains and the rivers. You’ve never seen them before” (214). The way in which Silko separates these three sentences is symbolic of the gaps, silences, and details she utilizes to get Andy and the reader to understand. The journey itself is primary, the mountains and rivers are separated but lie in the center, and the realization that Andy has never seen the plural “them” stands in the end. While the “them” can be in reference to the mountains and rivers, Silko’s sentence structure also indicates that she refers to the journey itself. Silko is not indicating that the mountains and rivers are just sights and locations, but that they are at the core of the journey. In the beginning and in the end, the mountains and rivers remain. We, as humans, grow, change, die, and live on and so does the land. Nature remains, not in a static form but forever changing. Additionally, Silko indicates that just as there Siteye pushes Andy to learn the journey that his Laguna people have travelled and that he must also continue to travel.

As Siteye continues his conversation with Andy, the moments of silence and the absence of words become even more symbolic of the power of the unsaid, the unspoken and hidden. Andy begins to understand the meaning in the absences of words, which becomes more apparent at Siteye, continues his story, “When Geronimo or some Apache hit that little white settlement near the Mexican border” (215). Siteye again pauses and then goes on, “[t]hat was as close as the Apaches ever got. But by the time we got there the people had been dead at least three days. The Apaches were long gone, as people sometimes say” (215). Siteye intentionally does not explain if he means whether that is as close as the Apaches ever got to the Mexican border or to the white settlement or to the white army. He creates ambivalence and doubt. And he creates more silence and then continues, “Wiped out—all of them. Women and children. Left them laying all over the place like sheep when coyotes are finished with them” (215).

In this brief and violent story, Silko marks how senselessly bodies are marked for death, and marks how races are divided and subjugated based on labels that serve only to disguise their intents and/or deny others’ humanity. Siteye does not take joy or pity of the occurrence; he is just telling the story as a fact of life. Similarly, in another of Silko’s works, the grandmother in *Ceremony* explains at the end of the novel: “It seems like I already heard these stories before...only thing is, the names sound different” (*Ceremony* 260). After the story, the words come to an abrupt end. This moment of marked silence again is filled with stories left to be said--*not silenced* but waiting to be voiced.

While we do not hear of the “slaughter” of Indigenous peoples in Thoreau’s text, we vaguely hear about the slaughter of the moose and the fear of smallpox amongst the

Penobscot people. However, as noted previously, Polis does indicate some concern for his brother. Silko, on the other hand, gives Siteye time and space to teach his nephew. Recognizing the power, resistance, and defiance in storytelling, Andy notes: “It was beautiful to hear Siteye talk; his words were careful and thoughtful, but they followed each other smoothly to tell a good story. He would pause to let you get a feeling for the words; and even silence was alive in his stories” (215). Storytelling is not just an act of passing down a story to entertain; it is an act of survivance. Larry Evers explains that for Silko “stories have power because they allow characters to control systems—economic, social and religious—which seem beyond their control” (72). Siteye’s narration of the slaughter of the sheep illustrates this power. He controls the information to tell Andy, and he controls the information he reveals to the white army. Additionally, as Andy’s quotation above illustrates, each and every word Siteye uses is carefully chosen and narrated at a timed pace that exemplify the power the words carry as they rolled on the tongue, as they are unleashed, and the power and authority in the absence of words, prior to their birth. Furthermore, Andy says that silence is alive, and it is the storytellers that survive through their stories. Even in the absence of words, in the silence of stories, the story continues for the willing listener. This is precisely where Polis fits in. He finds a way to get his story written, even if it is not heard by the writer. Polis engages a discourse of defiance and rhetorics of survivance that allow his voice, his story, and his people to live on. Essentially, from Polis we learn that the story itself is stronger, more powerful, and more resilient than the written word.

In “A Geronimo Story” Andy interweaves the stories he has already learned with those that Siteye tells him. In addition, though, he also interprets the silence and

apparent gaps in the narratives as a source of power. For example, David L. Moore says that American Indian writers use silence to “navigate colonial waters,” which serves as an “acceptable gap of unknowing which may protect cultural knowledge, especially sacred knowledge, from co-optation, exploitation, or commodification” (634). The instances in which Silko creates physical silence, she gives Siteye power over the narrative. The storyteller controls the world that Andy is narrating, and the silence, as Moore explains, is not solely for an aesthetic value but in order protect the story. Additionally, Susan Berry Brill de Ramirez explains that Silko “invite[s] a more directly interactive participation from their readers” (333). The reader is not solely a witness but a participant in the story. In order for the story to be fulfilled, to be told, and understood the reader must engage the text and decipher the gaps, omissions, and silences.

Such an understanding of stories and delivery reconnects back to Polis. He knows Thoreau is dismissive, but he also counts on the readers’ willingness to piece together Polis’ narrative. Polis’ story becomes the gap, the omission, and the silence in Thoreau’s journal entries. Thoreau manipulates and caricatures Polis as the wild and “natural” man, and the best way to do this is to silence him. If Polis has no name because he is always referred to as the “Indian,” his actions are either vilified or mystified, and the stories he tells are *mis-told*, then all that is left for Thoreau to do is publish his book. In fact, in “Research Adventures on Indigenous Lands,” Linda Tuhiwai Smith also argues that for adventurers, such as Thoreau, “the actual experience the writers had and their encounters with ‘real life savages’ continually fed the imaginations of people ‘back home’” (82). Essentially, Thoreau’s text is utilized to construct a rhetoric about Indigenous people for the public. Thoreau explains that “[t]he next day

the Indian told me their name for light, —*artoosoqu*’, — and on my inquiring concerning the will-o’-the-wisp, and the like phenomena, he said that his ‘folks’ sometimes saw fires passing along at various heights, even as high as the trees, and making a noise” (200). In this example, Thoreau demonstrates Polis’ attempts to teach him about his people by answering his questions, but why does Thoreau refer to Polis’ “folks” in quotation marks? Does Thoreau not believe Polis’ story? Additionally, because David Moore argues that certain information is purposely left out of American Indian stories to protect the people, one must question why here, and, in other instances, does Polis reach out to Thoreau.

But utilizing Silko’s participant readers’ structure on Polis’ story leads us to see alternative purposes his of sharing of information with Thoreau. One possible alternative reason for trying to reach out to Thoreau could be the fact that Polis is unaware that his story and people will become appropriated novelties. Smith argues that in early situations Indigenous people were unaware they were the “research project” when Europeans began their exploration (81). Essentially, Polis could honestly be hopeful that if Thoreau and whites understand his culture and his way of life that there can be a better future for the two races to co-exist, peacefully. Another alternative could offer a more survivalist function. Recalling that Polis is concerned about his brother’s absence and distrustful of white men, it is not realistic that he would provide Thoreau with sacred information, as Moore argues, and hence would be more inclined to be secretive and in control of the journey. However, from Silko’s argument of readers as participants in the narrative and with Siteye as the model storyteller providing bits of information in the space of silence, could Polis not be aware then that Thoreau is

journaling his excursion and including his story within it? If he is, which is speculative but Thoreau does indicate that Polis made him a makeshift candle by which to read and write, could Polis then not be speaking to someone besides the author? Is Polis using Thoreau to tell his story in bits, in gaps, and in silences? Yes.

Polis is the storyteller and Thoreau is the conveyor of that information that exists beyond his own imagination. In essence, in the silences of the story or the missing details he does not include, Polis allows the reader, a more conscious reader, to comb through Thoreau's text to find the truth. The truth that Polis posits is that in the silence of time and space stands the voice of the Indigenous person that continues to exist despite all physical and textual forms of erasures instituted by colonial campaigns and the Thoreaus. Polis, in fact, tells Thoreau that "he lamented that the present generation of Indians 'had lost a great deal'" (259). The reference for this quotation is not to the land but to traditions. The land cannot be possessed, but a culture can be dispossessed if the stories that bring people together and teach them about the journey fail to be told or heard. While Indigenous peoples are certainly not disappearing, the stories can fade in the maps created to write over the conquered, but Polis, without Thoreau's awareness, takes the story back.

The power that embodies both Polis and Siteye as storytellers, Silko explains, resides within the story itself. In an interview with Laura Coltelli, Silko says that only "storytellers can get away with narratives within narratives within narratives" and that "the stories are in ultimate control of the narrator" (141). The stories of the Laguna People, the lava, the caves, and Geronimo control the narrator. The narrator narrates the story but does not control it. The storyteller, however, controls the story and has the

power to create layers of stories. In the story of the search for Geronimo, Siteye creates multiple layers of narratives. There is the story the narrator presents but does not control, and there is what the storyteller reveals. Andy assumes to be on a hunt for Geronimo, and it takes the journey for him to see the story Siteye strategically reveals. The storyteller provides the information, but it is up to the listener-reader to understand what the story actually means. In “The Allegash and East Branch,” Thoreau is the narrator but does not control the stories. He does not have power over the stories as he does not have power over land. Polis is the storyteller, and he reveals the multiple layers of stories that the narrator, Thoreau, does not understand. The listener-reader then must take in the story and interweave it with the information already inside him or her, to understand “what the story means right now and what it means for the future” and what it meant yesterday (Silko qtd. in Coltelli 141). As listener-readers of not Thoreau but of Polis we have to decipher what is the truth based on the absences and silences in the storyteller’s story. We must see what Thoreau does not.

Rhetorics of Recovery through Storytelling and Survivance

Both Polis and Siteye embark on the journey for their own reasons. So while the white men in the stories appear to be creating a colonizing narrative, telling the story of how they conquered American wilderness, in fact, Polis and Siteye are writing their own story. When Polis agrees to be Thoreau’s guide, he does it not so much because he is invested in the excursion for flowers, but as Thoreau narrates, “Me want to go myself; me wants to get some moose” (175). Additionally, Thoreau narrates: “His brother had been into the woods with *my relative* only a year or two before, and the Indian now

inquired *what the latter had done to him*, that he did not come back, for he had not seen nor heard from him since” (emphasis is mine 175). Polis’ pursuit is to provide for his family, but he also illustrates concern for the missing brother and distrust of white men, and perhaps even of Thoreau. But Thoreau does not provide any other information in regards to Polis’ concerns and distrust. In fact, we never hear of the brother again and, in the next line, Thoreau says that they moved on to a “more interesting topic” (175). Thoreau completely dismisses Polis’ concern and silences him. One is also left to question whether the search for moose and the absent brother are in any way related.

In Silko’s story, the army is seeking Geronimo and the Apaches because, according to their information, they have been attacking white settlements and have been killing everyone in sight. Siteye decides, “I think I’ll bring my nephew along. To saddle my horse for me” (212). Siteye’s clear dismissal of the danger the white army tries to convey that Geronimo and the Apaches pose indicates, as Polis does, an assertion of power, both over the journey and the story. Siteye has no intention of helping the army find Geronimo. He is using the trip to teach his nephew. Guiding the army and Thoreau through their journey allows Siteye and Polis to remain in control of what the white men will see. They are in control of the information by controlling the paths they will guide the white men through. Additionally, by the information they reveal and withhold, they are in fact controlling the story.

And despite Thoreau’s disrespectful and insolent treatment of Polis, he has inadvertently recorded Polis’ story. And through those brief recorded moments, we can recover and hear Polis’ story. In fact, from Polis we learn at least three things: first, that this land belongs to the Penobscot and the moose—this is their home—*it always will be*;

Second, hunting moose has always been a part of the Penobscot way of life and his present traveling demonstrates that they are still enacting their ways despite Thoreau's intrusions; and Third, that the land itself tells the history of this respected tradition and relationship between the moose and the Penobscot. Thoreau hears but does not listen and simply chooses to record these events to catalog them as part of his journey and experience among the American wilderness and among the people of the Penobscot Nation. Thoreau instead writes: "An Indian tells such a story as if he thought it deserved to have a good deal said about it, only he has not got it to say, and so he makes up for the deficiency by a drawling tone, long-windedness, and a dumb wonder which he hopes to be contagious" (191). He never hears the story Polis is apparently trying to tell him. Thoreau does not care to listen or rather to tell his readers about it. All that Thoreau cares about is the way in which he is creating the image of the "Indian." He is not simply trying to rediscover himself and nature and the "Indian"; he has claimed power, dominion, and possession over all of wilderness and all Indigeneity by re-creating Polis in whatever way he wishes.

Grounding ourselves within Silko's framework, understanding the power not of the narrator but of the storyteller, recognizing that absence of words and the moments of silence are purposeful and powerful, and returning to the beginning in "The Allegash and East Branch" while fast forwarding to the end in "A Geronimo Story," illustrates the narrative that is revealed in Polis' and Siteye's stories. In the beginning of "The Allegash and East Branch," Polis remarks that he will be a guide so that he can hunt moose, but Thoreau also explains that he is concerned over his missing brother and questions whether something wrong had happened to him. Silko's story reveals more

about the moose and brother question. Throughout “A Geronimo Story,” Geronimo is never present. Helen Jaskoski argues, “Geronimo is present only in the tracings that he leaves—his abandoned campsites [...] and the stories about him” (90). Geronimo is recreated into an almost mystical entity beyond space and time: a warrior, a hero, an invisible menace plaguing the white settlements, hope. He is recognized as one of the greatest American Indian warriors and is evading the white army while at the same time destroying them.

Siteye, by protecting Geronimo, is equally symbolic and powerful; as the storyteller, he is the connection to the past and a bridge to the future. Silko, through Siteye, is retelling history. Brewster E. Fitz argues that “A Geronimo Story” is “a storyteller’s quiet attempt to construct a text that views through the lenses of anti-assimilationist Indian ideology the story told in the ‘historical documents’” (94).

Geronimo is a symbol of a complete defiance of the American government.

Additionally, Siteye recognizes his unity with Geronimo as Indigenous, as survivors, as existing when all laws negate them. Siteye’s rhetorical warfare has always been with the information he omits and the silences that he chooses not to fill. As the narrative continues, Siteye has the opportunity to tell the army to disband the settlers so that they have a better chance of survival, but he chooses to remain silent. He only tells Andy, “I am only sorry that the Apaches aren’t around here. I can’t think of a better place to wipe them out. If we see them tomorrow we’ll tell them to come here first” (Silko 221).

Linking himself with Geronimo, Siteye hopes that the Apaches get there in time to wipe out the white settlers while they are huddled up together. In the end, the victory would be not only for Geronimo and the Apaches but also for Siteye and the Lagunas because

he will have taken a part in the kill through silence. Siteye says, “Anybody can act violently—there is nothing to it; but not every person is able to destroy his enemies with words” (Silko 222). Siteye’s power comes from what he chooses to reveal to the white army; by withholding information, he can help Geronimo and the Apaches survive another day. Additionally, we are forced to recognize the power bestowed upon words. Words have both the power to kill and protect. Our enactment of words, our use of these words must always be cognizant of the ways in which words can have very real consequences on everyone.

Polis invokes a comparable power demonstrated by Siteye to protect his brother and the moose. While from one perspective we can reasonably argue that Polis may, in fact, be looking for his brother, from an alternate view point, we can also argue that because neither Thoreau nor Polis ever mentions him again, the “brother” may be either his fellow Indian and/or the moose itself. The distinction though is never clearly revealed and may be due to Moore’s suggestion that certain information must be protected. For example, while on the excursion, Thoreau remarks running into two other Indians from the foot of Moosehead: “Our Indian knew one of them, an old man, and fell into conversation with him in Indian....They were returning from hunting. I asked the younger if they had seen any moose, to which he said no: but I, seeing the moose-hides sticking out from a great bundle made with their blankets in the middle of the canoe, added, ‘Only their hides’” (231). Thoreau, then, explains to his readers that moose hunting season is closed. Clearly, Thoreau does not try to understand that hunting moose is a way of life regardless of the season for the Indigenous groups in the area. Additionally, Thoreau does not understand that the creation of hunting seasons is a

European American creation designed to control who and when moose can be hunted and possibly even to control the massive slaughter of moose for their hides by non-Indigenous groups. The imposition of such laws protects the animals from European American slaughter, but, in effect, impedes Indigenous group's access to their food source and their hunting tradition. Additionally, Polis does hunt and kill a moose in the later part of the story (292), there are indications throughout the text that he does sell their hides and makes his living off of this, and there are also indications that this is how he feeds his family. If he does sell the moose hides, he will use the meat to feed his family. Returning to the image of Siteye's warfare alongside Geronimo, Polis and the other Indigenous men must protect themselves from being caught hunting out of season because they still need to feed their families. Additionally, by leading Thoreau into areas that have the least amount of moose roaming, Polis protects the moose from over slaughter for their hides by European Americans. Thus, I speculate that the unheard discussion Polis has with the older Indigenous man is to find out in what area they had been hunting and seen the moose in order to pursue an alternate route to lead the white men through.

Conclusion

As the stories draw to a close, the final images Thoreau and Silko present are emblematic of the reason for the journey in the first place. Thoreau ends with: "Soon after the Indian houses came in sight, but I could not at first tell my companion which of two or three large white ones was our guide's. He said it was the one with blinds.... This was the last that I saw of Joe Polis. We took the last train, and reached Bangor that

night” (326-7). Looking forever forward and escaping back into civilization, Thoreau rapidly moves to the end of his journal entry. Silko’s story, on the other hand, ends with:

We stopped. Siteye turned around slowly and looked behind us at the way we had come: the canyons, the mountains, the rivers we had passed.

We sat there for a long time remembering the way, the beauty of our journey. Then Siteye shook his head gently.

“You know” he said, “that was a long way to go for deer hunting” (223).

For Silko, the story is the journey but it is not simply “the journey” but “*our journey*” and essentially, *our story*. Additionally, an essential part of the storytelling tradition is a focus on the past, remembering the past to create a future. In this way, Silko illustrates that the *journey is life* as the *stories create life*. Understanding the journey and stories allow Indigenous people to survive. The army never finds Geronimo and the Apaches in the story. Geronimo and the Apaches survive in this story. Passing down the stories and sharing the journey will help Andy and future generations of Indigenous people, like the Apaches, survive. In this same way, Polis is also able to pass down large portions of his story through Thoreau’s ignorance of the land, the journey, and Indigenous people. In this way, Polis helps his people continue their traditions one more day and helps protect the moose from the white hunters that seek animal and human flesh with the same weapon in mind.

In the next chapter, “Rhetorics of Translation and Survivance: The Ethical Translation of Stories, Lands, and Bodies in the Chicano Poetry of Tino Villanueva,” I argue that the process of retelling, translating, and interpreting stories have very real

capacity to colonize the story. As such, I argue that as scholars our research on the work by people of color has to be cognizant of our imperial and colonial indoctrinations within academia so as to avoid colonizing the text. Additionally, I argue that interpreting and translating the works by people of color have to utilize rhetorical strategies that recognize the language and culture are inextricably linked.

CHAPTER IV

RHETORICS OF TRANSLATION AND SURVIVANCE:

THE ETHICAL TRANSLATION OF STORIES, LANDS, AND BODIES IN THE

CHICANO POETRY OF TINO VILLANUEVA

I too have walked my barrio streets,
 gone among old scars and young wounds
 who, gathering at the edge of town, on nearby corners,
 mend their broken history with their timely tales.

(I've been quizzed on Texas history—
 history contrived in dark corridors
 by darker still textbook committees.

I've read those tinged white pages where the ink
 went casting obscurantism across the page:
 the shadows had long dried into a fierce solid state.

And Bigfoot Wallace had always been my
 teacher's hero,
 and what's worse, I believed it,
 oh, how we all believed it.)

—Tino Villanueva “I Too Have Walked My Barrio
 Streets” (199).

Introduction

In the rhetorics of translation, in the system of discourse we use to translate meaning, there is a gap between what is told and written in the original text from that which is understood through the act of translation.¹⁶ There is a space of disruption created in the attempt to re-inscribe what a text says and what a translator claims it says. In “Challenging Traditional Notions of Theory and Practice in Translator Training and in the History of Translation Studies: Two Exemplary Cases” Edgar Andrés Moros argues that the binary distinction between the theoretical and practical understandings of translation and translation studies are problematic, and he says that the “distinctions are seen as arbitrary and culturally determined” and “generally used to maintain power differentials” (8). He goes on to explain that these oppositions are unnatural human constructs (Moros 8). Moros establishes that despite the belief or the desired understanding that the practice of translation is free from theoretical or ideological choices, the fact remains that “even if translators do not write about these choices as theory, there is an implicit theory that they have created and followed, and which may be inferred at a later time” (11). Translators are typically given the creative freedom to translate while adhering to the overall message of a text. But before translators can translate, they have to interpret the text for their own understanding. And so, their translation is a reinterpretation of a text filtered through their own ideological, theoretical, rhetorical, and cultural understandings. Their translation is a re-inscription of a story upon the original text. Language is culture specific. Memory and stories are

¹⁶ My use of “text” is not in exclusive reference to an alphabetical written text but rather used to imply the multiple forms of “texts” we read that do and do not use any form of alphabet and do include performative and other forms of material texts. All of these texts require a reading of some form and the transfer of information from the original text to a level of understanding requires an act of translation.

culturally and locally based. My approach to the readings of these poems, then, is as a rhetorician, trying to understand the subtle shifts in language used to make meaning and recognizing that language and culture are inextricably linked. Thus, my reading of these poems is heavily influenced not only by Villanueva's history but also by Chicano and migrant worker history in Texas. My readings are informed by Chicano and Indigenous practices and long traditions of storytelling, resistance, and survival. Additionally, my readings are influenced by my recognition of the colonial tactics that have been used to colonize people of color. My readings of these poems are my recovery of a story that has been suppressed by the translation.

Third Space Politics of Rhetorics and Poetics

This understanding of the relationship and denial of a relationship between a translator and a text creates a situation where the actual text and the translation of a text can be two separate and highly divergent narratives. While they are both attempting to tell the same story, we must recognize that the translation of a text carries an imposed reading dependent on the translators' personal ideologies and theoretical understandings of the text. For example, a few years ago, I encountered Tino Villanueva's poem "Haciendo Apenas la Recolección" in Lorraine Anderson's anthology *Literature and the Environment*. Immediately I was struck by the editors' loose translation of the title and summation in regards to the significance provided in the introduction to the poem. "Haciendo Apenas la Recolección" from Villanueva's poetry collection *Shaking Off the Dark* is translated by the editor as "Barely Remembering." The editor's translation of the title suggests the grasping of threads of memory, a faint remembrance that needs

more work. The use of “barely” also carries connotations of scarcity and insufficiency, suggesting that there are only scarce or insufficient memories. But that is not the case. “Haciendo Apenas la Recolección” can also be translated as “Barely Making Recollection” or “*Just Now* Making Recollection.”¹⁷ The key to understanding the real significance of this title and the poem is by recognizing the theoretical and cultural discourses of the narrative Villanueva has created. “Haciendo Apenas la Recolección” is part of the *Hay Otra Voz Poems* in which, as Alfonso Rodriguez suggests, “[a]s a former migrant worker, [Villanueva] has personally experienced the struggle, and he has developed a way to deal with his attitudes and frustrations through the creative process in the form of a poetry of social commitment” (84-5). Furthermore, in “Haciendo Apenas la Recolección,” Villanueva retraces the routes of his childhood and reality as a migrant worker in Central Texas. And it is significant to note that the journey he undertakes in the poem is the recovery of his story—one that provides a “sense of peace and liberation” through the process of retelling his story (Rodriguez 85). As such, in either of my suggested translations, I argue that the speaker is not grasping at faint memories but is instead *just now initiating* the process of recalling these events. Additionally, there is a significant difference between Recolección and Recordar, which is the literal translation of “to remember.” Recolección, to recollect, has a more physical and active presence. The act of physically bringing things together and even more significantly bringing things together that *have been together* and somehow *belong together*.

¹⁷ Manuel M. Martin-Rodriguez also translates Villanueva’s “Haciendo Apenas la Recolección” as “Just Beginning to Remember” in “Aesthetic Concepts of Hispanics in the United States” *Handbook of Hispanic Cultures in the United States: Literature and Art* (118).

So despite the editor's translation of the title and by association the poem itself, Villanueva does not barely remember his story. He is just getting started. The distinct difference between the text and the imposed reading on the text creates a rhetorical space, a third space¹⁸ that exists between the original text and the imposed text. One in which we must question, how much of language exists beyond the words we say, hear, and read? How much of the language we use is inextricably linked to culture? How much of the language we use cannot be translated with words alone but requires an embodied and lived understanding of the text beyond the words? And what happens in the space created between the text and the mistranslation of the text? Whose story are we really hearing in a translation of a text? How can we tell the difference?

There is a third space that is created between the convergence and divergence of the text and a translation/imposed/suggestive reading of a text. A third space that exists between borders created by language itself in which the bodies contained within in it must negotiate their presence and colonial history's attempted erasure. Within this third space, these rhetorical borderlands, the audience engages and interrogates the imposition of a translation, the colonial gaze of a text, and denounces and rejects it in order to allow the text to speak for itself and ultimately engage a new trickster discourse and trickster rhetorics created by the space.

This space constitutes that of the borderlands, the rhetorical borderlands, upon which we must confront the colonial gaze. In *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Gloria Anzaldúa describes the borderlands as rupturing spaces where time, history, and peoples collide. To live in the borderlands is carrying the weight of history

¹⁸ I discuss Emma Perez's third space in Chapter I.

on your back, to carry the “*hispana, india, negra, española,[y] gabacha*” on your back (Anzaldúa 216). To live in the borderlands is recognizing that in this space you are “at home, a stranger” (216). To live in the borderlands means that our bodies are the battlefields, and we are always fighting back (216). Ultimately, though, to live and *survive* in the borderlands is to be a crossroads and to learn to live *sin fronteras* (Anzaldúa 217). It is within this context that the rhetoric of the borderlands emerges. It is a rhetoric informed by the history, the bodies, the tongues, the scars, and the open wounds. It is a rhetoric negotiating land and history; it is challenging presence over absence, erasure, and denial. The borderlands consist of stories upon stories voiced by the multiple bodies that inhabit this space both in the physical and theoretical understandings of this space. Within the borderlands, the voices and stories that are heard represent the very real bodies and very real histories. Villanueva’s story is a borderland story where memories, histories, presences/absences, and voices collide. He negotiates history and the imposition of history upon his body, mind, and memory. Villanueva finds the ways by which to rhetorically cross borders by showing how borderland stories transcend this space, challenge this space, and challenge *us* to consider how the borderlands are about decolonial work. The imposed reading of his text undermines this capacity, ignores the decolonial work, and provides a suggestive reading adhering to a colonial history. Through this imposed reading of the text, Villanueva’s story is trapped by history and bound by colonial practices.

Furthermore, Emma Pérez argues that a decolonial imaginary utilizes third space feminisms to contradict and challenge dominant discourse. She says, “the decolonial imaginary in Chicana/o history is a theoretical tool for uncovering the hidden voices of

Chicanas that have been relegated to silences, to passivity, to that third space where agency is enacted through third space feminism” (Pérez xvi). The decolonial imaginary is a tactic by which to challenge the colonial history embedded within the lands, bodies, and stories. It is a space to reclaim and recover histories. It is a space where rhetoric and theory emerge as a way to dismantle the hierarchy of colonial histories. The decolonial process of this third space asserts a border rhetoric. Recognizing the decolonial imaginary as the process by which to interrogate the role of borders and the borderlands, these third space politics allow us to recognize the intricate weaving of stories, lands, and bodies. Doing so, allows us to differentiate between the borders that must be insisted on to protect stories, lands, and bodies, and those that must be disputed. While Anzaldúa speaks of the border as an unnatural boundary, as certainly a division that must be challenged, in *Cronica de Mis Años Peores*, for example, Villanueva asserts a need to maintain a control of his story, by drawing a rhetorical border around his story. This border is necessary. However, utilizing the third space created by the decolonial imaginary we can build a theoretical and rhetorical border, as a way to cross over albeit briefly. To engage the decolonial discourse within this third space means to recover and reclaim Chicana/o history. To engage the decolonial discourse within this third space means that we hear Villanueva’s story and recognize the dangers of the imposed story. To engage decolonial discourse means that we begin to write another story in the spaces of divergence.

Within the borderlands, the decolonial imaginary, the third space, we can not only challenge the colonial impositions of the translation of the multitude of bodies and voices, but we can utilize this rhetorical space to recover the histories that have been

inscribed into the lands themselves. Additionally, both Anzaldúa and Pérez explain that this space is a space where by its embedded conflict and internalized interrogations and renunciations of colonial practices are locations of resistance. The space created by the fringes of the colonial history of the borderlands is precisely that rupturing space created by discordant languages that have not learned to speak and hear one another. The rhetorical spaces between the actual text and the imposed text are precisely that of the borderlands and the decolonial imaginary and as such are spaces for interrogation and renunciation. Within this space we get to hear not only Villanueva's story but the story that is created in the rejection of what David Spurr refers to as the colonizer's gaze (15).

In *The Rhetoric of Empire*, Spurr explains that the ideology of the gaze consists of the "combination of pleasure and power [that] gives the commanding view a special role in journalistic writing, especially in the colonial situation, for it conveys a sense of mastery over the unknown and over what is often perceived by the Western writer as strange and bizarre" (15). This commanding view of the colonizing gaze is the approach taken by producing translations of a text. In the "Haciendo Apenas la Recolección" example above, the editor assumes a mastery of the title in Spanish for an expected largely non-Spanish and non-native Spanish speaking readership. This controlling colonizing gaze, then, also informs the rest of the poem even though it is in English and Spanish. Because of the editor's insertion of a suggested translation of the title alone, the editor has begun the process of colonizing the text and silencing the narrative. As Spurr explains, when people are "gazed upon, they are denied the power of the gaze; spoken to, they are denied the power to speak freely" (13). The editor, by providing this translation, fails to engage the text ethically when she does not acknowledge that there is

a history of resistance and storytelling that sustains communities of color that aid in the survivance of groups of color and one from which Villanueva speaks.

Villanueva is certainly not the only author that can and has had his narrative colonized by the “creative freedom” of a translator. While I am not suggesting that all translations and translators are wrong, I am suggesting that a more critical approach to conducting said translations is necessary. Additionally, I am far from suggesting that writers of color have no agency over their texts or that they enact no heavy resistance on their part. In fact, I’m arguing quite the opposite. As previously noted, I argue that it is within the third space of the borderlands created between the actual text and the imposed text of a translation that we as the audience can utilize to both allow the original text to speak for itself by interrogating and denouncing the coloniality of the translation itself and also enact decolonial tactics utilizing trickster rhetorics of survivance. Additionally, authors allow and/or facilitate the creation of this third space through their rhetorical tactics utilized to tell their story.

Decolonizing the Text Using Trickster Rhetorics, Mixed-blood Rhetorics, & Survivance

In *Crónicas de Mis Años Peores* (*Chronicle of My Worst Years*), Villanueva tells the story of the disillusioned self-recognition of himself as both a fugitive and traitor to Mexico and as an encumbering remnant and reminder of conquest and domination to America.¹⁹ But in the process of telling his story, Villanueva loudly denounces academia and to be more specific, the continued perpetuation of a colonial history

¹⁹ This collection was originally published without the translation as *Crónica de mis años peores*. La Jolla: Lalo, 1987.

deeply embedded within every fiber of the American education system. This is the story that he tells but this is not the story that is translated. In *Crónica de Mis Años Peores* Villanueva utilizes Spanish almost exclusively, and in doing so he displaces readers whose first language is not Spanish, and who must resort to English translations of his work. Translations can be imprecise and they are often embedded with inert ideologies. These translations create a story—a story that is imposed upon the original text. A story that supplants the original story, that takes over the story, and that colonizes the story. The English translation provided for *Crónica de Mis Años Peores* by James Hoggard creates a story that adheres to the binaries, asserts the colonial gaze and control of the text, and is dismissive of the decolonial tactics exhibited in Villanueva's work. In fact, Villanueva asserts a series of decolonial tactics and other rhetorical maneuvers using trickster discourse and rhetorics and acts of survivance.

Enacting survivance is a method by which Villanueva can both challenge and defy representations of Chicanas and ultimately reclaim Chicano history.²⁰ The encounter of the actual text and the imposed reading of a text, between the real and the imagined narrative is the third space. The encounter itself creates a rupture, a borderland in which multiple peoples and histories collide. But it is also within this third space that we can and must engage a border discourse of resistance and survivance utilizing trickster discourse and trickster rhetorics. In the space created between Villanueva's text and translation of the text is that space within which bodies, stories, and lands collide. It is where the colonizing gaze attempts to control and silence the story, quiet the bodies, and maintain the status quo. But Villanueva's work is decolonial, and it is protected by

²⁰ A thorough discussion of survivance and trickster rhetorics is presented in Chapter II.

the border of language itself, seemingly inaccessible to non-native speakers who are reliant on the English translation.

Villanueva's enactment of trickster rhetorics and survivance takes center stage in the interplay between the languages, the histories, and the resistances to translation that are demonstrated in his collection *Crónica de Mis Años Peores*. As discussed in Chapter II, the trickster is always present and never silent though it is not bound to text or language. The trickster exists in the spaces between the real and the imagined, breaking down paradigms and binaries, and trickster discourse is the means by which to undo or rather subvert a dominant discourse (Vizenor *Narrative Chance* 5). Powell explains that for Vizenor to play trickster, to invoke the trickster is to break language down to see how it is creating meaning, how it is mapping reality, and how we are written within it. She says: "Trickster discourse is deflative; it exposes the lies we tell ourselves and, at the same time, exposes the necessity of those lies to our daily material existence..." (Powell "Blood and Scholarship..." 9). Within the third space created by the actual text and the imposed reading of a text exists the trickster and trickster discourse which allow us to see the two narratives coexisting side by side, allow us to hear the original text not by translating it but by hearing and feeling the narrative, and ultimately allowing us to interrogate and challenge the ideological impositions created by the translator that seeks to overthrow the original narrative. Using trickster rhetorics, then, means recognizing how meaning is made through the rhetorical maneuvers to dispel the colonial gaze. Using trickster rhetorics means both recognizing how the discourse maps reality and how we can re-map our understandings of this space and time.

Villanueva is a prolific writer who has written extensively in English and in English and Spanish. However, within *Crónicas de Mis Años Peores*, Villanueva engages an exclusively Spanish text to define his childhood and to recover his history. In an interview with Robert Lee, Villanueva explains that in this poetry collection that memory should “serve as inspiration--memory as muse, and ultimately, memory as identity. So you see, memory, for me, becomes a useful device to go back in time to recover a history which would otherwise be lost--a personal or communal history, no matter how lackluster or unsettling that history might have been” (qtd. in Lee 176). In the process of both denouncing the dominance and rejecting the perpetual state of victim, Villanueva utilizes trickster discourse to disrupt the colonial gaze. He utilizes a trickster discourse in his refusal to play the perpetual victim, in his defiance of the colonial indoctrination he received in his education, and in his rejection of English to relate this story of his childhood. We utilize trickster rhetorics to hear his story, to recognize the rhetorical patterns that are denouncing colonial impositions, and to hear the rhetorical mappings and remappings that must occur simultaneously in a decolonial space.

Mixed-blood rhetorics, according to Powell, are a methodology of both how we approach a text and interrogate how a text is constructed to subvert colonial impositions.²¹ To engage mixed-blood rhetorics is not only to read against the grain. Mixed-blood rhetorics are an active practice of defiance. It is a recognition of the rules academia sets for how we all are able to tell our stories and narrate the stories of others in translations, and because these rules do not have everyone’s best interest in mind, it is

²¹ A more thorough discussion of mixed-blood rhetorics is found in Chapter II.

a rejection of these rules. Readers are often left to accept a translation as the definitive text. As in the example of the “Haciendo Apenas La Recolección” title, translators can not only misread, but can also fail to understand, and to even impose their own understandings onto a text. But within the rules of writing and translating, translations are expected to accurately represent the original text. Authors’ approval of a translation leads readers to assume its accuracy. These are the rules. What happens when authors approve of a translation as accurate while there are clear ideological, cultural, and rhetorical (mis)translations taking place? What if the differences in the translation are subtle enough to escape the author but not the readers? What if the author purposely breaks this rule?

And yet, whether or not the author verifies the accuracy of the translation and/or whether or not the translator’s intentions are ethical, in the end we have the text. We have the original text that tells one story, and we have the translation that can tell a different story. And in between these two narratives we have another story that is written in this third space. This third space, this third narrative, is the borderland upon which these two stories collide and upon which we have the capacity to interrogate, challenge, and defy the boundaries of these two stories in the hope of hearing the story that is written from the discord of the often divergent narratives. The story emerges. If we are cognizant of the imposed reading on his text, of the coloniality of this event, then we can hear both stories that are written while recognizing the ability to hear this third story that emerges in the internalized dialogue that occurs between people who share history and a similar cultural understanding of race, politics, and land.

Villanueva is actively practicing survivance and enacting mixed-blood rhetorics. He is transforming the rules set forth by academia at large. He establishes new rules about ethically engaging the translation of a text by forcing us to recognize that a dictionary translation is incomplete, by forcing us to understand that the rhetorical use of language is inextricably linked to culture. By allowing the two narratives to exist side by side Villanueva forces us to recognize the artificiality of language itself. While they are seemingly a mirror reflection of each other in a different tongue—the reflection is distorted; the reflection is incomplete. Thus, we must question the source of the reflection. Whose voices do we hear? Who is the witness and who is the storyteller? How is history reflected upon? Who gets to reflect? Who gets to be our source of that reflection? And how much power is bestowed on such reflections?

In the process of forcing us to think about these questions, Villanueva asserts that a text is always a reflection, always a translation. For example, in an interview he says, “I would say poems are what they are; they do what they do. Some of them, if deep-textured enough, will admit multiple interpretations, and the latter are left up to each reader, as you know. One is not privy to what each reader may or may not derive from what they read--you get out of literature what you bring into it” (qtd. in Lee 175). As readers, we are always in the process of reception, interpretation, and ingestion. Hearing and feeling the stories, recognizing the power of these stories on our own memories and bodies, and utilizing these moments to build more stories. As such, stories can also be a point of danger because of what we can bring into the narrative. We have the capacity to suppress it, misinterpret/misunderstand/mistranslate it, and even to colonize it. Thus, the space that Villanueva creates between his text and the translation of his text is the third

space. It is from this space that we simultaneously look forward and backward, centered in the fluidity of the “now,” hearing and feeling and responding to the multiple voices speaking all at once and hearing and listening to our own bodies and memories respond to convergent and divergent narratives. We are in this third space of the decolonial imaginary. We are in the process of decolonizing the text, decolonizing history, and decolonizing ourselves simultaneously.

Crónicas de Mis Años Peores: *Challenging the History Lessons*

I vividly remember the cool feel of the cotton aqua colored Mickey Mouse t-shirt that blistering hot summer of 1988 when we moved to El Paso, Texas. I had worn a dark brown polyester school uniform with a pleated skirt, pressed white blouse, knee high white socks, and black, rubber soled shoes all my school days en la Escuela Primaria Ricardo Flores Mangón en Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico. The Mickey t-shirt was my first t-shirt, and I remember I wore it every single day until my mom got rid of it. It had Mickey in the front in a Hawaiian button up shirt and black sandals with a palm tree in the background.

We made the move to El Paso when I was in the third grade. My mother had finally started the process of leaving my father; he just didn't know it yet. I and my two siblings were all born on the right side of the border, as they say, so it was a matter of time before we returned to claim our citizenship.

“Tu eres ciudadana, eh?” My mom always reminded us that we were US citizens and had to tell the customs agent that we were “American” when we crossed the bridge.

“American!”—we loudly sounded off every time the brown customs agent peeked

into the back seat.

We were the only Mexican kids at the Tree Haven apartment complex in El Paso. I recall one evening in the parking lot two older white boys kept asking me to say “Social Studies.” There was a small crowd around us—a bunch of kids whose names and faces I can’t even make out in my dreams any more. I don’t remember how it started either, but I do recall that they would burst out laughing every time I said “Social Studies.” I laughed too. The other kids also laughed. I didn’t understand what was so funny about “Social Studies,” but I enjoyed being part of the crowd. It was just the title of the book after all, or so I thought, but I laughed along. Years later, I recognized that instead of saying “Social Studies,” I was saying “Sho sho Studies.”

My ears could not tell the difference. My mind had not learned the rules. My tongue struggled to sound the word.

“Sho sho Studies”: I kept repeating on demand—laughing with the crowd. That was just the first of my many mispronunciations.

My mispronunciation of “Social Studies” and the laughter that ensued speaks volumes about the rhetorical use of “Social Studies” to teach history to elementary school children. At that moment, I learned that in order to be a part of the laughing-group versus the being-laughed-at-group, I had to learn to use the language efficiently. But I also learned that the dichotomy of the available options presented by these two groups—those that laugh and those that are laughed at—are dangerous and detrimental to communities of color. I did not want to be a part of either group. And because my initial immersion into English was difficult and traumatic, it became the language I only spoke at school. In my mother’s home, even today, we all still speak Spanish. But my

experience learning English, led me to recognize the power of language. By speaking the right language in the right way and in the right space, I would not be the butt of the joke. By speaking the right language the right way, I could protect myself from such scenarios by avoiding particular words. And by speaking the right language in the right space, then I could navigate both worlds—English at school and Spanish for my real life. As a child, I recognized that language was a weapon that could be used against me but also one that I could learn to manipulate to defend and protect myself.

Traditionally the English language has served as one of the master's tools, and, as Audre Lorde reminds us, "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (112). As such, we need to re-tool, to "reinvent the enemy's language" to suit our needs.²² As such, our use of the English language must go beyond just pronouncing words correctly. In *The Borderlands/La Fronteras*, Anzaldúa says "I am participating in the creation of yet another culture, a new story to explain the world and our participation in it, a new value system with images and symbols that connect us to each other and to the planet" (103). It is within this space of the borderlands that we have the capacity to dismantle the master's house re-utilizing the tools available to us. We might be using the same language, but we are blending it with our other tongues, our bodies, our memories, and our stories. The tools to dismantle the master's house are ours. They are culturally and locally based. They are embedded within our stories. We must have our stories heard, in our own tongues, through our own bodies, within our own histories. Our stories must carry the flavor of el cafecito con leche, el pan dulce, los frijoles de la

²² The phrase "reinventing the enemy's language" comes from the title of Joy Harjo and Gloria Bird's anthology *Reinventing the Enemy's Language: Contemporary Native Women's Writing in North America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997).

olla y las tortillas hechas a mano. Our stories must carry the sounds of children's laughter, of comadres platicando, la comida guisándose, la música nortea, la corrida, la cumbia, los mariachis, y el tambor de los matachines. Our stories must carry the weight of all those that came before us and all those that depend on us, those that did not get the privilege of going to the university, those that stand with us in the struggle, those that did not finish la primaria, those women that crossed over every week/everyday to clean and cook and take care of other peoples' homes and families, those men that crossed over every day to do anything ANYTHING to take money home, those that work in factories here and in Mexico, in the fields, in the kitchens, in the shadows of existence. Our stories must carry the humbled recognition of our common plight and our need to fight. Our stories need to undo the history that is written upon us.

This is precisely where Villanueva steps in after growing up in the 40s and 50s in San Marcos, Texas prior to the Civil Rights Movements (Lee 171). Having been indoctrinated with the same colonizing history that marginalized, erased, and dispossessed Indigenous peoples, Villanueva, as a child, is forced to hear the same demoralizing stories about his people. Villanueva begins *Crónicas* with "Clase de historia" ("History Class") that initiates the act of survivance and rhetorical resistance. Villanueva's begins with:

Entrar era aspirar	<i>To enter was to aspire</i>	To enter was to breathe in
la ilegítima razón ²³ de la	<i>The illegitimate truth of the</i>	the illegitimate idea of the
clase,	<i>class,</i>	class,

²³ "Razón" means motivo & argumento (reason), acierto & verdad, (to say something is right) juicio (reason), información (inquire within), ratio (at the rate of), and recado (message) (*Webster's* 410).

ser solo lo que estaba escrito.	<i>be only that which was written.</i>	only what was written was valid.
Sentado en el mismo predestinado ²⁴ sitio	<i>Seated in the same predestined place</i>	Seated in the same prescribed place
me sentía, al fin, descolocado. (2).	<i>I felt myself, finally, dislocated.</i>	I felt myself, finally, dislocated.
	<i>(My translation)</i>	<i>(Hoggard's translation)</i>

The rhetorical difference between these text creates a rhetorical borderlands, a space of the decolonial imaginary. This third space must be utilized to recover and reclaim history. The narrative Villanueva provides suggests that the classroom itself embodies the fraud and pageantry of manifest destiny. The subtle shifts in meaning change the story. While translators are allowed a creative freedom in their translations of another's words, the fact remains that these are *another person's words*, their story, and that within this "freedom," translators are able to inscribe their own story upon the original text.

Furthermore, as Villanueva reminds us in the interview, we all bring something to the reading. We bring our bodies and our own stories and the stories of the lands we have survived upon into what we read. Within this freedom this capacity to impose ourselves exists a danger for the text. If the translator's center is based on an essentialists' view of history, of an overreliance on racialized hierarchies created by colonial agendas and indoctrinations, then these readings have a very real capacity to inflict harm on the text. In doing so, they have taken over the narrative and imposed their own ideologies. They have begun the process of colonizing the text. Their goal

²⁴ "Predestinado" literally translates as "predestined" not "prescribed," which asserts claim over an object for an undetermined length of time (*Webster's* 389).

then is not to accurately and ethically translate a text but to provide a “good” translation. But taking these creative freedoms changes the story.

As in the example provided above, Villanueva’s text is more concerned with the colonizing goals of the education system that serves to erase and/or to criminalize Chican@ students within the history classroom. In the passage and subsequent translations above, Villanueva utilizes “aspirar” to mark the action of his body as he enters this space. “Aspirar” has two possible translations.²⁵ One is similar to Hoggard’s translation, as in “to breathe in,” “to inhale.” Another common definition of “aspirar” though is “to aspire.” Similarly, we can argue that the act of aspiring to a dream, for example, requires more than a fleeting thought of a set goal but rather that the actual process of aspiring requires one to begin to believe in the actualization of said dream. But this does not mean that we achieve it or simply attain this dream by aspiring to it. For example, Chican@s are told to aspire to the American dream achievable to all who enter its ivory towers, while failing to recognize that within this space we are reduced to nothingness. Hoggard’s translation, however, suggests that within this educational space we become a part of the fraud. Because to enter is to breathe: to enter is to ingest suggests that we all become complacent within this educational system, that the process of entering this space allows us to ingest the illegitimacy a reality, allows us to accept the fraud as our reality.

In addition to the problems with translating “aspirar,” it is also important to recognize the subtle shifts that the second part of this line create in which Villanueva refers to “la ilegítima razón de la clase” and that Hoggard translates as the “illegitimate

²⁵ *Translations were verified using Webster’s New World. Concise Spanish Dictionary. 2nd ed. 2006. (45)*

idea of the class” (2-3). While Hoggard’s translation suggests that the idea of the class is illegitimate, voiding the capacity of the members of this class to achieve anything, Villanueva asserts that we are trained to aspire to the illegitimate reason or *truth* of the class. *La verdad de la clase*. Essentially, Villanueva says that from the moment we enter these educational spaces we are trained to desire something that does not exist, that cannot be attained, and that will always be withheld from or for students of color. We are well trained in wanting the American dream, but the system is in place to keep us from achieving it. Villanueva recognizes that it is all a fraud, and thus separates what we know and accept as truth from the history we are told to accept as ours. This is the only way we can survive.

As Villanueva continues to tell his story and Hoggard continues to tell his version of the story, it becomes increasingly significant to identify the presence and effect of colonizing ideologies in the rhetorics of translation:

Era cualquier mañana de	It was some morning in	It was some morning in
otoño, o primavera del 59,	autumn,	autumn,
y ya estábamos	or the spring of '59, and	or the spring of '59, and
los de piel trigueña	already we were	already we were
sintiéndonos solos,	the wheat-colored people	the wheat-colored people
...	feeling ourselves alone,	who felt alien,

el estado	the state	the state
desde arriba	from on high	from on high
contra nosotros sin el arma	against us with no weapon	against us with no weapon

de algún resucitable ²⁶ dato	of any resuscitable date	of a retrievable date
para esgrimir	to wield	to wield
contra los largos	against the long speeches	against the long speeches
parlamentos	of that teacher	of that teacher
de aquel maestro	with the hard Southern	with the hard Southern
de sureña frente dura,	mien,	mien,
creador del sueño y	creator of the dream and	creator of the dream and
jerarquías,	hierarchies,	hierarchies,
que repetía,	who repeated,	who repeated,
como si fuera su misión,	as if it were his mission,	as if it were his mission,
la historia lisiada de mi	my people's crippled	my people's crippled
pueblo: (2)	history. (my translations)	history. (Hoggard's translations)

Hoggard's translation essentially labels Chican@s's inability to use history as a weapon as a result of our "alien-ness." His use of "alien" to translate Villanueva's "solos" asserts that Chican@s' exist within America in a perpetual state as foreigners, outsiders, and possibly from another world. This perpetual state of outsider makes history inaccessible and invalid for Chican@s because it asserts that we do not belong, and therefore, history does not belong to us or rather does not include us. Such a translation perpetuates particular ideologies that not only impact the translation but the original text as well. Because Hoggard's translation, the version non-Spanish speakers hear, assumes

²⁶ Resucitable comes from the conjugation of resucitar which means either "to bring back to life"; "to resurrect, to revive" or "to rise from the dead" (*Webster's* 427 (S)). Retrieve is to recuperar, which is to recuperate, recover, reclaim, and regain (*Webster's* 383(E); 415 (S)).

that Villanueva accepts his foreignness as a given, this impacts the original unread text. Essentially, Hoggard's translations asserts that Chican@s accept our foreignness. But the fact remains that "solos" means "alone" not "alien." So under Hoggard's reading, Chican@ history is inaccessible because we do not belong and such history is utterly non-existent. And under such an understanding, Chican@s have no recourse to the dreams and hierarchies forced unto us.

On the other hand, while Villanueva describes the sense of isolation resulting from the inability to reclaim and defend ourselves using our Chican@ history as a weapon, he also recognizes that this history exists but becomes inaccessible in the shadow and fraud of the American dream and American history. He recognizes that we must give new life to the Chican@ history that paints us not as outsiders but at home. Such a new life is achievable by allowing this suppressed history to be told and heard. But under an education system that continues even in 2012 to criminalize our history and suppress our voices, Villanueva reminds us that we must find a way to tell our story even if we have to resist, defy, and utterly change the system from within to start the process of decolonizing the academy and decolonizing our history.

By the end of the poem, it is clear that while both Villanueva and Hoggard are seemingly talking about the same thing, essentially using the same variations of the same words, the liberties Hoggard takes with both translation choices and even word order changes the overall meaning of the text. Villanueva says:

Aquí mi vida cicatriza	<i>Here my life scars over</i>	Here my life scars over
porque soy el desertor,	<i>because I'm the deserter,</i>	Because I'm the deserter,

el malvado ²⁷ impenitente	<i>the wicked impenitent</i>	the profane impenitent
que ha deshabitado ²⁸	<i>who left</i>	who quit
el salón de la demencia,	<i>the classroom of madness,</i>	the crazy class,
el insurrecto	<i>the insurrectionist</i>	the insurrectionist
despojado de los credos	<i>stripped of the creeds of the</i>	stripped of the creeds of
de la negación.	<i>negation.</i>	negation.
Sean, pues,	<i>So let there be</i>	So let there be
otras palabras las que	<i>other words that are</i>	other words that are
triumfen	<i>triumphant</i>	triumphant
y no las de infamia,	<i>and not the ones of infamy,</i>	and not the ones of infamy,
las del fraude cegador.	<i>those of the blinding fraud.</i>	those of the blinding fraud.
(8-10)	<i>(my translation)</i>	(Hoggard's translation)

At the end, it is not so much that the translation is vastly different, but rather, that at significant and various moments, there are subtle changes in the translation and even in the multiple translations available that have the capacity to change the story. The rhetorical patterns of the subtle shifts in meaning change the story. Hoggard creates a “good” translation in the sense that it is lyrical and poetic, but there are nuances in the language that are unaccounted for. At times these nuances are very subtle but within this subtlety lay the difference in the story that is told. The shifts in meaning in one word do not change the reading but recognizing the rhetorical patterns of these shifts in translation through various moments in the text do alter the story that we are weaving

²⁷ Malvado translates as evil, wicked, or a villain (*Webster's* 308 (S))

²⁸ Deshabitar means “to leave, to depopulate, to empty of people” (*Webster's* 157 (S)).

within the third space. Utilizing trickster rhetorics we are able recover a reading of this story that is trapped by the translation. Utilizing trickster rhetorics, we are able to hear subtle shifts in meaning that have the capacity to denounce the colonial gaze of the translation. Hoggard's translation tells the story of someone who has healed despite the fraud of American history and suggests that there is nothing we can do about it. History gets blamed as the problem. And history is a problem. But Villanueva illustrates that history's continued erasure, dispossession, and abuse of Chican@s continues to be perpetuated in the American education system. And while Villanueva does note a healing process has occurred, he, like Anzaldúa, carries the scars upon his body and recognizes that there is still much work to be done to rid ourselves of the blinding mentality of such a universalizing history.

Challenging the Construction of Languages

While Villanueva loudly denounces the education system's continued complacency and perpetuation of an indoctrinating colonial history in "Clase de historia," in "Convocacion de palabras" ("Convocation of Words") he interrogates the institutionalization of language itself. And while his text engages this discourse, again Hoggard's translation largely deviates from and is dismissive of Villanueva's story. Villanueva begins with:

Yo no era mío todavía.	<i>I was not my own yet.</i>	I still wasn't free.
Era 1960...	<i>It was 1960...</i>	It was 1960...
y recuerdo bien	<i>and I remember well</i>	and I remember it well
porque equivocaba a	<i>because I would mistake</i>	because every day I got the
diario	<i>daily</i>	sense
el sentido de los párrafos;	<i>the meaning of the</i>	of the paragraphs mixed
(22)	<i>paragraphs.</i>	up: (Hoggard's
	<i>(my translations)</i>	translations)

Villanueva speaks of the frustration that comes from not speaking the dominant language but does so explaining that the incapacity to hear the meaning of text and a language has the very real power to take possession of the individual. In other words, the inability to communicate, the inability to translate, has the power to control the story and control the bodies within the story. Hoggard's translation, however, suggests the speaker sees himself as captive caused by some sort of mix up with meaning of a text. This then has the capacity to assert that Chican@s accept this kind of subordination to language itself. There is no mix up, however. The speaker says he mistook the meaning altogether which makes the misunderstanding more in-depth. The inability to read and understand the text leads one to seek and hear versions of these stories based on what someone else can explain them to be. In such circumstances, there is no way to ensure that the meaning of the text is maintained, and there is no way to confirm that what you hear is what Villanueva said. This is precisely what happens with Hoggard's translation. Without ethically engaging Villanueva's text, taking into consideration both Chican@

history, regional language nuances, and other rhetorical strategies of storytelling practices among Chican@s, we have a different story altogether. Hoggard's story utilizes a colonial gaze to other Villanueva's poem, to neglect the decolonial tactics taking place, and to continue the perpetual marginalization of Chican@s are foreigners and outsiders. In such a situation, the original story is withheld within the text, within the language, within the imposition of the translated version of the story.

The frustration that Villanueva displays in the inability to hear or fully understand the information contained within the paragraphs leads him to recognize the need for himself and for Chican@s to reject the imposed colonizing indoctrination by taking an active role in self education. He says:

Irresoluto adolescente,	<i>Indecisive adolescent,</i>	Indecisive adolescent,
recién graduado	<i>recently graduated</i>	just graduated
y tardó para todo,	<i>and late for everything,</i>	and habitually late,
disciplinado ²⁹ a no aprender	<i>disciplined to learn nothing,</i>	taught to learn nothing,
nada,	<i>you will do for yourself</i>	you will do for yourself
harás de ti	<i>what the classroom</i>	what the classroom
lo que no pudo el salón de	<i>couldn't.</i>	couldn't. (Hoggard's
clase. (22)	<i>(my translations)</i>	translation)

While Villanueva suggests that he was disciplined or trained to learn nothing, suggesting that this is an ongoing process, Hoggard translates this as the speaker has been "taught" to learn nothing, alluding that this is a onetime occurrence or an event that occurred in the past. This is significant because Villanueva is suggesting that within this education

²⁹ Disciplinado literally translates as disciplined (*Webster's* 169 (S)), which carries connotations of being trained to do or not do something, of self control and/or imposed to be self controlled.

system different standards are set for Chican@s and students of color in general. For example, in the excerpt provided at the start of this chapter from Villanueva's "I Too Have Walked My Barrio Streets," he asserts that Chican@s are forced to learn and quizzed on the history of their alleged ancestors' demise, forced to repeat the words that criminalize them, erases them, and invalidates their presence within the classroom for a grade. These measures as well as an adherence to a primary imperialist traditional pedagogy, as will be further discussed in Chapter IV, students of color are generally not expected to succeed, and there multiple systems are put into place to ensure their failure. Sadly this is an occurrence that is not limited but is extensive and wide spread across all educational levels ranging from elementary education through graduate school. While there are certainly excellent educators, schools, and districts/departments that reject such discriminating practices, the fact remains that these are almost the standard. Additionally, such mentality is widespread enough that even fellow classmates can engage such tactics that undermine students' of color efforts to succeed.

In order counter the power of the words, of the language, and diffuse the authority that is bestowed on the translator/translation, Villanueva invokes a convocation of words that primarily illustrates the archaic and hierarchical construction of knowledge, but also initiates the process of the decolonization of the language. He says:

Esta será tu fe:	<i>This will be your faith:</i>	This will be your faith:
<i>Infraction</i>	Infraction	<i>Infraction</i>
<i>bedlam</i>	bedlam	<i>bedlam</i>
<i>ambiguous.</i>	ambiguous.	<i>ambiguous.</i>
Las convoque ³⁰	<i>I've convened them</i>	I summoned them
en el altar de mi deseo,	<i>in the altar of my desire,</i>	at the altar of my desire,
llevándolas por necesidad	<i>taking these out of necessity</i>	raising them by necessity
a la memoria.	<i>to my memory.</i>	into memory.
En la fecundidad de un	<i>In the fertility of an instant</i>	In the fertility of the moment
instante	<i>I multiplied myself:</i>	I was multiplying myself:
me fui multiplicando:	affable	<i>affable</i>
<i>affable</i>	prerogative	<i>prerogative</i>
<i>prerogative</i>	egregious.	<i>egregious.</i>
<i>egregious.</i>	<i>One after another,</i>	One after another
Cada vez tras otra	<i>I assimilated their history,</i>	I made their history mine,
asimile ³¹ su historia,	<i>which was equivalent to</i>	which was equivalent to
lo que equivale a rescatar	<i>rescuing</i>	redeeming
lo que era mío:	<i>what was mine:</i>	what was mine:
<i>priggish</i>	priggish	<i>priggish</i>
<i>eschew</i>	eschew	<i>eschew</i>
<i>impecunious.</i>	impecunious.	<i>impecunious.</i>

³⁰ Convoacar means reunión (to convene); huelga, elecciones (to call) (*Webster's* 121 (S))

³¹ Asimilar means idea, conocimientos, alimentos (to assimilate); compartir (to compare); equiparar (to grant equal rights to) (*Webster's* 45 (S)).

Porque las hice doctrina	<i>Because I made them a</i>	Because I turned them
repetida horariamente,	<i>doctrine</i>	into hourly repeated doctrine,
de súbito	<i>repeated hourly,</i>	suddenly
yo ya no era el mismo de	<i>suddenly</i>	I was not the same as before:
antes:	<i>I was no longer the same</i>	<i>assiduous</i>
<i>assiduous</i>	<i>one as before:</i>	<i>faux pas</i>
<i>faux pas</i>	assiduous	<i>suffragette.</i> (Hoggard's
<i>suffragette.</i> (Villanueva's	faux pas	translations/Villanueva's
italics 22, 24)	<i>suffragette. (my translations</i>	italics 23, 25)
	22, 24)	

In this convocation, Villanueva begins by inserting particular words in English. What's significant about this weaving of words is both the meaning, and story these few words tell. Villanueva asserts that these words will become his faith (22). Convening them upon an altar, the words become either his sacrifice or his offering in his active renunciation of the domination that has plagued his story and in the hopes of decolonizing this space. His story becomes his faith and thus in this creed like explication of his story and history, Villanueva argues that we must utilize multiple languages as we utilize multiple spaces to engage the process of decolonization. And thus the story Villanueva tells begins by recognizing the problem with the system ("Infraction / bedlam / ambiguous"), a system in which the violations against people of color in a backdrop of chaos makes their humanity uncertain. Villanueva brings these words to his altar of desire and invokes them to his memory out of necessity

(“llevándolas por necesidad / a la memoria”), out of the necessity to remember, to revisit, and to reclaim the history that is denied and from which his people are erased.

As Villanueva continues to build his history, the English words begin to pile up into a mound containing stories and bodies. In a poetic retelling of history, Villanueva explains both the lure of the American dream, the eminent danger Mexican people experience (“affable / prerogative / egregious.”), and how recent immigrants are instilled with the desire to assimilate to reach some form of acceptance but are only shunned and end up living in an impoverished state (“priggish / eschew / impecunious”). Villanueva asserts though that in process of attempting to accept the indoctrinated history, of attempting to demonstrate that they belong, there is also an ongoing process of recovery that is occurring. In other words, Villanueva demonstrates the ways in which our stories and our histories are interconnected. While we may be seemingly hearing someone else’s history or we may be in the process of indoctrination and colonization, we are also hearing threads of our own cultural history. Essentially, the lands, the bodies, and the stories are interconnected and interrelated. We have crossed and interacted with each other for centuries and our languages’ movements are no different. Lands, stories, and peoples of color continue to exist and so do our languages. Villanueva’s play with words here then is demonstrative of the mapping that occurs with language, the way language has been given the power to divide, categorize, and erase.

Operating under the mistaken assumption that only one dominant language will survive and/or has the capacity to control the stories it is used to tell, the fact remains that the English and Spanish language as almost every other Western language is heavily influenced and built by the multiple and various groups it has come in contact with. The

histories that the English language tells, as well, despite its desire to exclusively tell and glamorize the story of “white man” and manifest destiny also carries millions of suppressed stories of people of color who have shared in time and place. Villanueva’s indoctrination within American history, within the colonizing history of America, carries fragments of his own history (“Cada vez tras otra / asimile su historia, / lo que equivale a rescatar / lo que era mio:”). This is not suggesting that Chican@ history or the history of people of color in general is fragmented or only exists in the shadow of a larger universalizing history, but rather that these grand histories are not self-contained, obsolete, or absolute. These histories are various, ongoing, and interrelated. Thus, by the end of this passage, Villanueva asserts a change within him, an education in and of resistance and defiance. That in the face of such a constant ongoing indoctrination, he is left to persistently defy and break the rules created by the same language; he is left to remind others to fight the system and resist such an education. His defiance, his enactment of mixed-blood rhetorics is marked then by approving of Hoggard’s translation that fails to accurately retell his story and also by utilizing multiple dominant Western languages to tell his story. It is not that he does not have an Indigenous tongue of his own or that he does not recognize Spanish as a colonizing language as well,³² but that he utilizes Spanish in recognition of the history of land and his people. Anzaldúa explains that “Chicano Spanish is a border tongue which developed naturally. Change, evolución, enriquecimiento de palabras nuevas por invención o adopción have created variants of Chicano Spanish, un nuevo, lenguaje. Un lenguaje que corresponde a un

³² Villanueva includes other poems that interrogate and reclaim his Indigenous heritage and tongue such as *Cuento del cronista* in which he invokes Tlacuilo.

modo de vivir. Chicano Spanish is not incorrect, it is a living language” (76). As such, Villanueva is not technically using or preferring to use a colonizer’s language but making the rhetorical choice to frame and tell his story in the language of this space. His precise and careful use of these specific English words that in themselves form a self sustaining sentence exhibit how histories are constructed within a matter of words, how bodies are forgotten and displaced among these words, and how sometimes we must both acknowledge, challenge, and subvert these words to tell our story.

As this poem draws to a close, Villanueva recognizes that the process of reclaiming our history and our bodies requires authority and control over the text. He argues that this process begins by both dispelling misconceptions and misinterpretations of who we are and learning how to write our own history as we write down our own name. He says:

Tenaz oficio	A tenacious task	A constant effort,
el de crearme en mi propia	that of creating myself in	creating myself in my
imagen	my own image	own image
cada vez con cada una al	each time I pronounced one	each time I pronounced
pronunciarla:	of them:	one of them:

Villanueva explains that the power to write our own history has the power to create ourselves. Furthermore, he says:

postprandial	postprandial	postprandial
subsequently	subsequently	subsequently

y de escribir por fin con	and finally willingly writing	and finally willing
voluntad	the fourteen letters of my	myself to write
las catorce letras de mi	name	the fourteen letters of
nombre	and over it	my name
y por encima	the work	and over them
la palabra	libertad. (my translations)	the word
libertad. (26)		libertad.(Hoggard's translations)

To be able to write down our own name has the power to release us. This *libertad*, however, transcends that of any physical bondage but a recognition that our bodies and minds can be consumed and confined by the history that we hear. In the case of a history that consistently seeks to revisit the exploitation and oppression of people of color, we, the people of color, continue to be seen as both victims and criminals. In either of these views, we are always less than human and become unreal. Our bodies, our stories, and our victories and defeats become unreal. And within the realm of the unreal, it becomes increasingly easy to ignore us, abuse us, or deny our human rights and liberties. Villanueva's final act of inscribing "*libertad*" over his name teaches us that we are all responsible for our freedom and to find this *libertad* we must actively seek it and defend it.

Villanueva's interrogation of both how we are written and how we are translated are interconnected. Whether a text attempts to tell Chican@ history or translate it, we must question their ethical engagement with the text and with the history. There is a text

and there are words and there is a space that transcends these—a rhetorical third space that constitutes histories, lands, and bodies. Villanueva challenges the way history is written, what history is written, how bodies are written and criminalized within it, how lands cease to contain bodies and stories but become territories, and how students of color within the American classroom continue to be subjected to the same discriminating practices both in how they are taught and what they are taught. Ultimately, however, Villanueva recognizes that our complacency with this system as scholars and educators is part of the problem. If we want to change the system, if we want to truly build a better society where humanity is not measured by the color of skin, by the accent in our stories, or by the “foreignness” of our surnames, then we have to be willing to write down our own names, tell our own stories, and inscribe *libertad* over all of it.

Conclusion

Villanueva’s work forces us as rhetoricians to recognize the danger that constitutes the interpretation, the analysis, and even the translation of texts, especially those by people of color. His work forces us to recognize that despite our best efforts, we will always bring something of our own into the texts—our own agendas, our own ideologies, and epistemologies. Recognizing this potential then, in these collections Villanueva asserts that we must ethically approach all texts. We must recognize both the spaces which the text inhabits and the center of our understandings of the text and the discourse that is being engaged. Furthermore, Villanueva helps us to recognize the fluidity of language, the capacity of language to destroy, and the need to speak multiple languages. The fact remains that even when the text is in English, the language might

not be English. Essentially, speaking of decolonial approaches, attempting to decolonize our classroom, our bodies, and our minds often leads us to learn and speak another language. It is a decolonial discourse that presents itself in the third space. In the space created by the “text” and the translation/interpretation/analysis and imposition of the new story. As such, our approaches must demystify colonial tactics and practices so that we can recognize them as such. So we have a chance to decolonize our spaces, our stories, our bodies, and our minds.

In the next chapter, “Decolonizing the Writing Classroom: Pedagogical Storytelling Practices and the Rhetorical Alliances between Literatures and Rhetorics,” I present a theoretical understanding of the writing classroom and the colonial practices that still inhabit it. I begin by providing a theoretical and historical background of some of the colonial practices within academia and the writing classroom that have been used to formulate and structure the pedagogies within these spaces. Because of the increasing presence of students of color within academia and writing classroom, I assert that we must begin to decolonize the writing classroom by building interdisciplinary and cross cultural alliances between rhetorics and poetics and between peoples of color. Towards the end of that chapter, I illustrate how practicing storytelling pedagogies in the writing classroom will allow us to counter the colonial practices in academia and be more responsive to the needs and capacities of all of our students.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: DECOLONIZING THE WRITING CLASSROOM: PEDAGOGICAL STORYTELLING PRACTICES AND THE RHETORICAL ALLIANCES BETWEEN LITERATURES AND RHETORICS

I will tell you something about stories.

[he said]

They aren't just entertainment.

Don't be fooled.

They are all we have, you see,

all we have to fight off

illness and death.

You don't have anything

if you don't have stories.

— Leslie Marmon Silko *Ceremony* (2)

Introduction

Through my research and my pedagogical approach, I utilize Leslie Marmon Silko's words "You don't have anything if you don't have stories" as the basis for understanding my responsibility as a scholar, as a teacher, and as a woman of color (2). I recognize stories as frameworks that need to be interrogated, challenged, and engaged as a way to oppose the systems of power and oppression operating within academia and in our communities. In my first chapter, I examined the role that crossing borders and building interdisciplinary and cross-cultural alliances have on the prolongation of colonial practices within academia and specifically within literature and rhetoric

programs. I provided a methodology for disrupting that standardization and division of rhetorics and poetics in order to disrupt the canon, aid in the recovery of marginalized stories, and provide build cross-cultural alliances within academia and in our communities. In the last three chapters, I demonstrated how the methodology set up in Chapter I works. Within these chapters, I draw rhetorical alliances and juxtapose rhetorics and poetics in order to recover and/or tell a new story that has been traditionally marginalized and silenced by our overreliance on colonial practices. This chapter argues for a decolonial approach to the pedagogies instituted within the writing classroom, arguing for the use of storytelling as a performance and performative strategy by which to disrupt an imperialist tradition of composition pedagogy. In order to do this, I illustrate how the university system adheres to colonial practices instated at its inception while also providing a rhetorical mapping to decolonize these spaces—the academy and the writing classroom. I will then suggest how curriculum, pedagogies, and assessment are specifically designed for white male able-bodied, upper class, and Christian student populations and the detrimental effects these practices have on students of color, non-traditional students, first-generation college students, and working class students. Lastly, I will demonstrate how storytelling works as a practice and performance within the classroom and how such methods have the capacity to radically change the dynamics of the writing process and the building of communities and alliances within and beyond the university.

While there are English departments that have been consolidated within World Literature departments or have had the Rhetoric and/or Creative Writing counterparts form separate departments at various universities throughout the nation, English

departments are largely still referred to as The Department of English. But what does it mean to teach for the English department? Do we actually teach English as a foreign language? Do we teach English history, culture, and literature? Or are we complacent with a systematic attempt to make English/Anglo-Saxon the dominant language? And, even more significantly, how does this emphasis on an English department and English classes impact not only how we construct our curriculum and pedagogies but also how our students of non-English ancestry and/or literacy respond to enrolling in such classes?

After the 2008 election of the first African-American president, only months following President Obama's inauguration speech, Attorney General Eric Holder commented that "Though this nation has proudly thought of itself as an ethnic melting pot, in things racial we have always been and I believe continue to be, in too many ways, essentially a nation of cowards" (qtd. in Barret np). Holder's commentary, the backlash, and national debate that ensued illustrates that the nation is at a pivotal and dangerous point in the story of us as a country and as a people. We have the capacity to move together and recognize the racialized problems that have continued to plague us or we can turn a blind eye. But as demonstrated by the continued exploitation of people of color, the overwhelming disregard for the standard of living within communities of color, and the recent statewide assault on Mexican American Studies in Arizona and such potential censures in other states, we are forced to acknowledge that racism is a disease we simply cannot wish away, vote in or out, and definitely cannot deny. How do we address these societal problems in the classroom? How are our curriculum and pedagogies helping change this problem? How do we respond to our students and the multiple cultural, historical, and linguistic backgrounds that they bring to our

classrooms? And lastly, what kind of relationship and/or responsibility do we see both our scholarship and our teaching fulfilling? In this chapter, I will argue that the racialized hierarchies operating and oppressing people of color on an everyday basis are the same that are continuously perpetuated within academia and the writing classroom. While academics of color and our allies are increasingly challenging the systemic racism that dominates the university system, there will always be forces fighting to maintain the racialized divisions, oppressions, and hierarchies.

As educators we must confront the colonizing practices of the university system on two fronts. Primarily, we must utilize decolonial practices within the construction of our curriculums and pedagogies in which we cross the borders that are instilled to divide us as a body of people and create interdisciplinary and cross cultural alliances to redefine who “the people” consists of and what they are capable of. Secondly, in our research and scholarship, we must recognize our responsibilities to not only our localized communities but to our global communities. We must recognize that what we say, teach, and write have very real consequences in the shaping of our future, in the treatment of all peoples. And lastly, we must put our theories into practice. We must recognize that the writing that we do cannot be something exclusively reserved for conferences and articles, but that we must set the path for how we interact and respond to the needs of the multiple communities we inhabit.

Colonizing Practices and Pedagogies

If we can teach the history of racism in the United States as the history of the shifting needs of empire, as a history of both impositions and choices,

alliances and betrayals, a history with roots far outside and long before the first colonial encounters, if we can hold the tension between disbelief in race and belief in what racism does to us, we will enable more and more young people to remake old and seemingly immutable decisions about where their interests lie and with whom.

— Aurora Levins Morales *Medicine Stories* (81)

As more thoroughly presented and discussed in Chapters I & II, the racialized constructions of society are as a result of what I refer to an ongoing colonial campaign that systematically facilitates and encourages the widespread dissemination of racist and sexist indoctrination. In *Killing Rage: Ending Racism*, bell hooks argues that "...as a structure of domination that is defined as the conquest and ownership of people by another, colonialism aptly describes the process by which blacks were and continue to be subordinated by white supremacy" (109). Even after the end of slavery, hooks asserts that "white supremacy could be effectively maintained by the institutionalization of social apartheid and by creating a philosophy of racial inferiority that could be taught to everyone. This strategy of colonialism needed no country, for the space it sought to own and conquer was the minds of whites and blacks" (109). The effects of colonialism are felt each and every day. Furthermore, as indicated by the history of this country, the role of people of color, and the bigotry that is too often exhibited by people of *all* colors, the system of white supremacy instituted with the arrival of colonialism is still largely implicated in the oppression of people of color today.

But as hooks explains here, Andrea Smith in "Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy. Rethinking Women of Color Organizing" also reminds us

that racialized binaries of the white/black or even white/non-white form are a problem (69-71). She says that:

in our efforts to organize against white, Christian America, racial justice struggles often articulate an equally heteropatriarchal racial nationalism. This model of organizing either hope to assimilate into white America, or to replace it with an equally hierarchical and oppressive racial nationalism in which the elites of the community rule everyone else (Smith 73).

The racialized hierarchies can exist in a myriad of ways. In our efforts to disrupt and/or to destroy one hierarchy, we have to be wary of constructing another. Audre Lorde reminds us that:

I simply do not believe that one aspect of myself can possibly profit from the oppression of any other part of my identity. I know that my people cannot possibly profit from the oppression of any other group which seeks the right to peaceful existence. Rather, we diminish ourselves by denying to others what we have shed blood to obtain for our children. And those children need to learn that they do not have to become like each other in order to work together for a future they will all share. Within the lesbian community I am Black, and within the Black community I am a lesbian. Any attack against Black people is a lesbian and gay issue, because I and thousands of other Black women are part of the lesbian community. Any attack against lesbians and gays is a Black

issue, because thousands of lesbians and gay men are Black. There is no hierarchy of oppression. (“There is no Hierarchy of Oppression” np)

We have to be cognizant that the language and rhetorical patterns we use to dismantle the master’s house does not create another master. As such our pedagogies and curriculum must circumvent the reflexive propensity to perpetuate and/or recreate a new racialized pattern within our classrooms.

As educators, if we recognize our responsibility to both our students and our communities, then we must recognize that in the construction of our curriculum and pedagogies we must address the call Aurora Levins Morales presents in *Medicine Stories*. Morales argues that providing an in-depth and accurate representation of the not only the roots of racism but also the consequences of these issues on our society, then we have the capacity to change the future. While we cannot change the past, nor is this her suggestion, Morales does suggest that we need to assert a particular agency over the construction of our future. This process means that we adjust our curriculum according to the needs of our diverse classrooms and utilize that multiplicity as a way to interrogate the social constructions of the classroom, department, university, and our communities.

Although the “diversity is a strength” motto is a likely response to the increasing diversity in our classrooms and is utilized to seemingly encourage the diversification of the student body, we as educators generally fail to address it in the way we construct our curriculum when we continue to use colonial standards on education, intelligence, and even assessment. As such, we need to acknowledge that *cultural diversity* also means *linguistic diversity*, and this needs to be recognized as a resource within the writing

classroom. Tim Limbretti reminds us that in the continued prolongation of an imperialist tradition in the writing classroom we must recognize that:

The more serious obstacles, however, at least in terms of their insidious unspokenness, are basic and often unarticulated sets of assumptions and policies informing writing pedagogy and literacy standards at the university in addition to the implicit premium placed on—and insistence on, even enforcement of—English fluency and mastery as an index of one’s intelligence, ability to learn, and potential to contribute meaningfully to the social good—indeed, as an index of one’s human worth. (xv)

The systemic racist discourse that pervades our daily lives as “Americans” is widely disseminated within the academy, and to be more specific, within the writing classroom. Both outside and within the classroom, we have constructed our society and our classrooms in accordance with a long established colonial agenda and racialized hierarchy.

Outside the classroom these racialized hierarchies map out our realities. These rules decide how to segregate school districts, allow communities of color to be exposed to toxic substances, commit racial profiling increasingly incarcerating more and more people of color, have historically allowed the medical experimentation upon people of color, and enabled the forced sterilization of both women and men of color. Within the university, work by people of color is traditionally marginalized, ignored, and suppressed. And as discussed in Chapter I, the racialized hierarchies within Literature and Rhetoric departments have worked to displace, invalidate, and at times ridicule the

work by people of color. In the writing classroom, too, adherence to problematic and essentializing rubrics, pedagogies, and overall standards of what constitutes “good” writing, how this “good” writing is to be created, and who is able to produce this work is inherently based on the same racialized hierarchies.

Resolutions to this ongoing problem within the writing classroom have been formally addressed by the Executive Committee on the Conference of College Composition and Communication since 1974, in which they resolved that:

We affirm the students’ right to their own patterns and varieties of language—the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style. Language scholars long ago denied that the myth of a standard American dialect has any validity. The claim that any one dialect is unacceptable amounts to an attempt of one social group to exert its dominance over another. Such a claim leads to false advice for speakers and writers, and immoral advice for humans. A nation proud of its diverse heritage and its cultural and racial variety will preserve its heritage of dialects. We affirm strongly that teachers must have the experiences and training that will enable them to respect diversity and uphold the right of students to their own language. (“Student’s Right to their Own Language” 1)

But despite these resolutions scholar Geneva Smitherman has noted as recently as 1995 that these practices are rarely upheld. She notes that the strongly conservative shifts in the politics within the United States following the presidential election of President Ronald Reagan in 1980 largely resulted in educators’ disregard of this resolution

(Smitherman 24). She argues that “[a] genuine recognition of such students’ culture and language is desperately needed if we as a profession are to play some part in stemming this national trend. I write genuine because, in spite of the controversy surrounding policies like the ‘Students’ Right to Their Own Language,’ the bicultural, bilingual model has *never* really been tried” (Smitherman 26). We need to return to this resolution. We need to acknowledge how we can utilize this resolution to construct our curriculums. Additionally, as Christopher Schroeder recognizes, “people who use more than one language, and thus have more than one way to express experiences and examine environments, have more resources than those who only have one language at their disposal” (7). Utilizing our students’ cultural and linguistic diversity is certainly a resource that must be acknowledged, and we need to build courses that are responsive to such resolutions.

As Limbretti explains, our overreliance on universalizing standards utilizing a person’s fluency and mastery of the English language, a European colonizing language, as a measure of one’s intelligence and human worth displaces and silences students of color within the writing classroom. Limbretti argues then that we should recognize not just the multiculturalism within the writing classroom but the multilingualism, which, he argues, “enables more effective production of knowledge about and understanding of our world and thus, it would seem to follow, greater prospects for developing a more humane culture that promotes the good life for all” (xv). Thus, Limbretti asserts that the belief of simply asserting that diversity is a strength does nothing to fix the problems that exist within academia but rather continue to promote an imperialist agenda.

It's a problem that both the way we design our curriculum and how we assess our students' writings is under the expectation of adhering to some rigid code of what constitutes language and discourse. Such pedagogical practices assume or presume that these students have nothing to bring into the classroom, undervalues or ignores their own culturally defined rhetorical patterns (i.e. the ways meaning is made using discourse of some form), and aids in the inhibition TESOL students have about writing in English. Also, as Sid Dobrin explains, discourse that is engaged within academia is one in which it assumes itself to be the standard, that which we must all adhere to, but that "[a]cademic discourse is the alternative" (45). Essentially, the specialized language of academia is a separate language. While integrations of "mixed" or "hybrid" discourses challenge the construction of academic discourse, Dobrin contends that such practices still place academic discourse in a position of dominance (47). As a result of this discourse hierarchy, we revert to Limbretti's argument, in which academic discourse becomes the measure in terms of fluency and mastery by which we determine someone's intelligence and human worth. Operating under these constructions, the writing classroom will continue to perpetuate these linguistic and racialized standards and further displace our students of color, non-traditional students, working class students, and first-generation college students.

Decolonizing the Writing Classroom

In response to inherently colonizing institutions reflecting and/or perpetuating the same racialized and linguistic oppressions found outside of academia, the writing classroom becomes the space in which we can interrogate, challenge, and negotiate

pedagogical practices that are responsive and responsible for all the bodies that enter this space and their respective communities. The writing classroom is a pivotal space for us as educators to not only open the discourse for all of our students but to begin the decolonization process.

In order to counter this system, we must engage decolonial practices in our classroom and utilize this process to decolonize the academy. In *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Linda Tuhiwai Smith reminds us that the decolonization process is not to simply neglect or forget these Western figures, despite their many flaws, but to decenter Western ideological thought and provide a more inclusive and thorough understanding of our world including all peoples (39). Smith says, “Decolonization, however, does not mean and has not meant a total rejection of all theory or research or Western knowledge. Rather, it is about centering our concerns and world views and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes” (39). Smith calls us to recognize not only our own stake in the decolonization process but also to acknowledge that this process is dependent on our scholarship, our stories, and our bodies. As such, recognizing the inherent problems with Western education and Western thought and of utilizing these “master’s tools” in our research and pedagogical practices, we must engage decolonial practices and “we must break from the colonial discourse that binds us all” as Victor Villanueva has called for (“On the Rhetoric and Precedents...” 656).

Lorde, Powell, Smith, Villanueva, among many other scholars, ask us to change the system from within. They do not ask us to engage the same discourse, but to know how the discourse works and to do it better in order to change it, to radically transform

it. This of course is what Anzaldúa calls for with her new mestiza consciousness. She says:

En unas pocas centurias, the future will belong to the mestiza. Because the future depends on the breaking down of paradigms, it depends on the straddling of two or more cultures. By creating a new mythos—that is, a change in the way we perceive reality, the way we see ourselves, and the ways we behave—*la mestiza* creates a new consciousness (102).

Anzaldúa forces us to recognize that the shifting paradigms within academia are representative of those that we embody as individuals from multiple cultural, national, racial, sexual, gendered, and dis/abled backgrounds and understandings of the world we inhabit. And similar to Limbretti and Dobrin, forcing individuals who are *not* exclusively of European ancestry to only communicate in a rigid, foreign, and as Lorde, Powell, Smith, and Villanueva have established, a racialized and problematic discourse is detrimental to both the individual and to our future as a people. Anzaldúa instead suggests that through the body and mind, we become the mestiza, which means that we not only recognize and honor our multiple ancestries, but also recognize the power that we invoke in the multiplicities of our identities. Furthermore, she suggests that we recognize that the ideological split of our identities, that which seeks for us to recognize ourselves as flawed from our very multiplicities is in fact a source of power. We must embrace the multiplicities of who we are and change the spaces we inhabit to reflect these. Because in the end we must recognize that there is no such thing as “whole” or complete. We are all and have always been fragmented. Failing to recognize how this fragmentation is a resource has always proven to be detrimental to our understandings

and responsibilities to each other. As such there is a mistaken belief that only white male able bodied, upper class, and Christian men are whole and complete, and women and people of color in general must attain some kind of wholeness by submitting our bodies, minds, and scholarship to Western thought and ideologies.³³

Anzaldúa disagrees and instead suggests that we need a new language, a new story altogether, one that defies the construction of these divisive paradigms. Anzaldúa says, “I am participating in the creation of yet another culture, a new story to explain the world and our participation in it, a new value system with images and symbols that connect us to each other and to the planet” (103). If we recognize that the racialized constructions that have created the hierarchies within the academy are as a result of a colonial story, the grand history of America, the story of conquest and manifest destiny that still gets perpetuated within the classroom, then we have to recognize that the power that controls these problematic paradigms in our society are dependent on a story. In *The Truth About Stories* though Thomas King questions the power that is bestowed on the order of the stories we hear: “Do the stories we tell reflect the world as it truly is, or do we simply start off with the wrong story?” (26). We must interrogate the power that is bestowed on stories, the source of that power, and the storyteller. We must realize that there are multiple and alternate stories, that we all have stories, and that we all have the capacity to be storytellers. This realization begins to challenge the power bestowed on

³³ We must be wary of universalizing “white male able-bodied, upper class, and Christian” into one deviant group, but must recognize that these filters have been rhetorically instated to differentiate individuals who do not fit within these categories. But when we suggest that those do not fit the “white male able-bodied, upper class, and Christian” category get filtered out, then we make the argument that those that do fit within these paradigms are just as complacent and guilty. This is a problem. As such, I utilize this “category” as a way to problematize the definitional constructions of domination that assert that failing to fit within these options opens the door to oppressions. Furthermore, I utilize this category to reiterate the fact that we need a new language that interrogates and challenges hierarchies, challenges the divisions and constructions of the other.

the first story, the problematic story that begins to divide us, the oppressive story that hurts us, and the storyteller(s) that continue to narrate the story. It is a just story. There are many others. And, as Anzaldúa explains, the process of decolonization is in part recognizing that we too have a story to tell, we have a stake in the construction of the stories about us, and we must always continue to tell our stories.³⁴

We can and must use Anzaldúa in our pedagogies in order to decolonize the academy and the writing classroom. We must bring the stories into the classroom. Qwo-Li Driskill argues that “A decolonial approach to scholarship cannot take place if it ignores the connections between the struggles of Native people here and the struggle of people being colonized elsewhere” (183). As scholars and as educators, we must acknowledge that most of the higher education institutions are currently occupying Indigenous lands. Essentially, we have colonizing institutions on colonized lands that are still under occupation where 67% of the students are white, while 1% are identified as American Indian.³⁵ As a Chicana educator within a largely white able bodied male, upper class, and Christian institution, at Texas A&M University, I recognize the quandary of my presence in the writing classroom. My body is marked. I am one of the colonized. How do I engage a decolonial praxis within this institution? How do I get my students to care? How do I change the system from within?

³⁴ I utilize the label of “stories” to refer to short stories, poems, essays, articles, novels, history, theory, and so forth. Additionally, I also refer to stories that exist beyond the alphabetical transcriptions of rhetoric and discourse.

³⁵ Based on statistics provided by the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2005). *Digest of Education Statistics, 2004* (NCES 2006-005), its estimated that about 67% of students enrolled in degree granting institutions are of Anglo ancestry; 12% are African American; 10% are Latino; 6% are Asian; 4% are Nonresident Alien; and 1% are listed as American Indian.

As the national demographic of our country shifts, as more people of color are expected to become the majority within the next 50 years, our curriculums and our pedagogies must also shift and adjust to our students and their needs.³⁶ And as Driskill reminds us, to truly engage a decolonizing process in our pedagogies and our scholarship our decolonial approach must “commit itself in solidarity by acknowledging and engaging with both the commonalities and the differences in experiences of oppression and struggles for change. We must discuss the privilege and oppression if systems of domination and colonization are to be made transparent and disrupted” (184). The demographics of the country will shift and this shift will be felt in the universities as well. Thus, our task as educators is to build cross-cultural alliances within the classroom and within our scholarship. Such alliances will allow us to truly interrogate the systems of domination and colonization that we mutually wrestle with on a daily basis. bell hooks, in fact, argues that “[d]ivisions between women of color will not be eliminated until we assume responsibility for uniting (not solely on the basis of resisting racism) to learn about our cultures, to share our knowledge and skills, and to gain strength from our diversity” (*Feminist Theory* 57). Thus, a part of the decolonization process is dependent on the building of alliances, of recognizing the similarities and differences in our stories and in our oppressions.

³⁶ “The growth rate of the Anglo population will slow over the next 50 years and the growth rate of African Americans, Asians and Latinos will far exceed Anglo population growth. By 2050 the Anglo population is projected to be near 211 million people, the black population 61 million people, the Latino population 103 million people, and the Asian population nearly 33 million people. These changes represent only a 7.4 %t increase for non-Latino Anglos, compared to 71.3 % growth for Blacks, 188 % growth for Latinos, and 212.9 % growth for the Asian population.” (5) Lopez, Janet. *The Impact of Demographic Changes on United States Higher Education. 2000-2050*. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Summer 2006, State Higher Education Executive Offices.

hooks argues for a liberatory pedagogical approach to the classroom as a way to combat the inherent colonial practices within education. In “Toward a Revolutionary Feminist Pedagogy,” hooks says that as educators we should be “committed to the full self realization of students[is] necessarily and fundamentally radical, that ideas [are] not neutral, that to teach in a way that liberates, that expands consciousness, that awakens, is to challenge domination at its very core” (50). As such the practices we engage in the classroom and even how we assess our students’ work need to recognize that if we are utilizing that standardized methods instituted by the university system that prefers its students to be white males, then we are perpetuating the domination. We are asking our students to submit themselves, their bodies, and their voices to these colonial practices. hooks explains that “[a] liberatory feminist movement aims to transform society by eradicating patriarchy, by ending sexism and sexist oppression, by challenging the politics of domination on all fronts” (“Toward a Revolutionary Feminist Pedagogy” 50-51). A liberatory feminist pedagogical approach is an act of decolonization. And this approach can lead us to teach and build alliances. After all, hooks says that we need to interrogate the sources of division between peoples and find ways to come together (*Feminist Theory* 57). Engaging this decolonial practice not only confronts colonization and domination on multiple fronts but also allows us to build communities and “create a climate of openness and intellectual rigor” (*Teaching to Transgress* 40).

Literatures and Rhetorics: A Story of Rhetorical Alliances

As more fully explained in Chapter 1, within literature and rhetoric departments, there are racialized hierarchies that have marginalized the works by people of color. A

brief look at the cannon within both disciplines confirms such hierarchies but even the way curriculum is assigned, pedagogies are created, and reading lists are generated illustrate that the marginalization of works by people of color is wide spread and pervasive. But as Powell reminds us at the start of all her articles, “This is a story.” We must recognize that the separation between literature and rhetoric departments is artificial and political. Essentially, within literature and rhetoric, everything is a story; everything is a performance; everything is rhetorical. But the use of “story” to label some works and “rhetoric” to label others forever separates them. We thus have a discipline for stories and a discipline for rhetoric. The disconnection, however, avoids recognizing their capacity to be performances or the performative. And it is within this space of the performance, the enactment of the performance, the bringing the body into the material, into the classroom, into the discourse, that we begin to see the intricate rhetorical patterns that perform stories. In the absence of these recognitions, however, the story is labeled the creative and therefore not scholarly or academic. The story is suppressed. However, Angela Haas teaches us that “[t]heories are the stories we tell ourselves to make sense of the world around us” (17).³⁷ As such, the dismissal of the theoretical and rhetorical implications of the scholarly and academic potential within stories limits us as scholars to only half of the knowledge available to us, only hearing some stories, and failing to tell our own stories from within the ivory towers. We too have so many stories to tell.

³⁷ Malea Powell conceptualizes this idea in her 2002 article “Listening to Ghosts: An Alternative (non)Argument” found in *Alternative Discourses and the Academy* edited by Christopher Schroeder, Helen Fox, and Patricia Bizzell.

One form of storytelling cannot be held superior to others; the core of its story is not more important to all others because it is considered “academic” or “scholarly.” Other forms of storytelling such as the poetics cannot survive in the shadow of the scholarly when its stories are not considered as legitimate. Creating a hierarchy of writing serves only to colonize the discipline and the academy. Stories created by people of color, which often fall under the heading of personal and literary, are the first to be considered less worthy of an academic setting and are least heard from (Morales 26-27). Under such colonialist constructions of the academy, the literatures from and of people of color are marginalized, specialized into separate fields, and/or are dismissed and rejected entirely. As such the fact remains that there is a present and persistent need to build alliances between literatures and rhetorics. At stake are the stories that will remain silenced if we fail. In our pursuit of attaining the academic, of adhering to what constitutes **Academic Discourse**, we have failed to acknowledge that there is a whole body of work we have not heard. The stories people tell inform us of the way the world works and how we function within it. Stories also remind us of the responsibilities we have to each other, to ourselves, and to our communities. Stories build alliances.

Furthermore, it is important to remember that within both literature and rhetoric as disciplines, the work by people of color is consistently marginalized. But as Audre Lorde explains in her piece entitled “Poetry is Not a Luxury,” for women of color poetry “is a vital necessity of our existence. It forms the quality of light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival and change, first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action. Poetry is the way we help give name to

the nameless so it can be thought” (37). Additionally, Aurora Levins Morales argues that the process of the story is the process of bearing witness:

Whether it takes place in the supposedly private context of sexual abuse or the public and allegedly impersonal arenas of colonialism, patriarchy or a profoundly racist class society, the traumatic experience of being dehumanized and exploited strips people of their stories, of the explanations that make sense of their lives. Instead, it imposes on us the self-justifying mythologies of the perpetrators. We are left adrift, the connection between cause and effect severed so that we are unable to identify the sources of our pain (4).

These are the stories we tell. Because of their personal aspects, because these stories are real and we recognize them as such, we tend to forget or neglect their theoretical and rhetorical implications. We forget that we have a lot to learn from these stories. This is certainly a valid analysis of stories that can be applied generously.

Our stories as people of color are very much related to our scholarship; or rather our scholarship is reliant on our stories. As such, our scholarship often breaks the rules of the academy of what constitutes academic writing because of the personal aspects, because of the story. But as Victor Villanueva reminds us, the personal does not negate its academic qualities. In fact, he argues that the personal “complements, provides an essential element in the rhetorical triangle, an essential element in the intellect-- cognition and affect. The personal done well is sensorial and intellectual, complete, knowledge known throughout the mind and body, even if vicariously” (Villanueva “Memoria...” 14). The process of decolonizing the academy and the writing classroom

work hand in hand. We must recognize that in order to decolonize our discipline, we must interrogate our complacency with the colonial practices that exist within higher education and continuously challenge these systems through our scholarship and our pedagogies. By utilizing the stories, the performance of stories in our scholarship and within the writing classroom, we initiate the process of appreciating both the bodies and stories within the work we study and the students we teach. We can utilize stories to decolonize the writing classroom, our classrooms, and set the pace to decolonize the academy.

Storytelling Pedagogies in Practice

I'm going to stand here and tell you a story. It is a story about my maternal grandfather, Santiago Enriquez who was born and raised in Namiquipa, Chihuahua, Mexico. He lost his mom when he was just a boy; he lost his older brother when he went off to his aventura al otro lado and never returned; he lost his first two children to a bad sobada and to an empache; he lost a sister and another brother in the same week he lost his wife.

I'm going to stand here and tell you a story. My grandfather was a Bracero for some time. He worked the land. He carried the loads; he pushed the carts; he worked with his hands. The blistering sun burned his skin. He perspired and bled on the land. He did what he had to feed his family. He hummed songs under his breath as he worked and remembered his home.

Aquí me parare y te contare un cuento. Mi abuelo era como mi padre. Padre de mi Madre. El me encaminaba a la escuela. El me regalo una pluma azul y me dijo,

“escribe bonito, aguárdala.” Todavía existe. El me daba pedazos de madera para jugar y construir mis casitas y mis torres. El me dio su apellido cuando a mi padre no le importo. El falleció cuando yo tenía dieciséis años en el amanecer de una navidad. Tenía ochenta y cinco años.

I’m going to stand here and tell you a story. I’m the granddaughter of a Bracero. I’m the granddaughter of a carpenter. Of a man whose vision never failed and hands never stopped. Of a man whose Virgen de Guadalupe tattoo faded with time. Of a man whose songs continue to haunt me, whose words I cannot make out but always remember.

The story above is a series of stories about my grandfather. Within this brief narrative, there are dozens of embedded stories. And while they are stories about my grandfather, they are also my stories. They are a part of who I am because they begin to remind me of where I come from. But the process of remembering this story and orally delivering this in my classroom is a performance. In a symbiotic dance of mind and body and motion, I perform this story. Diana Taylor says that “[p]erformances function as vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity through reiterated, or what Richard Schechner has called ‘twice-behaved behavior’” (2-3). The oral delivery of the story is the method by which I transmit a series of information about myself to the classroom. The material alphabetic text of the story itself is not a performance but the delivery of the story is. This distinction is important because as Taylor explains “writing has paradoxically come to stand in for and against embodiment” (16). Essentially, writing as a means of communication has been utilized to replace the bodies, to speak on behalf of non-bodies, and historically has been used as

a measure of civilization and humanity and used to justify colonization. Taylor explains that “[t]he rift, ... does not lie between the written and spoken word, but between the *archive* of supposedly enduring materials (i.e., texts, documents, buildings, bones) and the so-called ephemeral *repertoire* of embodied practice/knowledge (i.e., spoken language, dance, sports, ritual)” (19). The delivery of the story in the writing classroom is a performance when I stand and deliver it. It is part of the repertoire. However, after my delivery, the written version of the story becomes archive. We need to recognize this distinction and utilize the performative aspects in the writing process within our classrooms.

In the writing classroom, we ask our students to write. When they get stuck, we tell them to free write. When they still cannot write, we tell them to write down their thoughts and ideas in brainstorming activities. We might even provide student samples of completed writing projects and ask them to use it as an example of what’s expected from them. All we have essentially said to our students here is to “write.” While all these activities might work for some, they will not help all of our students. One of my mentors always told this story to his classes about Americans traveling to foreign countries and expecting the people to speak English. He would say:

Americans will ask the people from other countries where English is not a dominant language:

“Do you speak English?”

When the person does not respond, the American again asks louder,

“Do...You...Speak...English?”

When no response is made, the American, growing increasingly frustrated and getting louder, asks,

““DO...YOU...SPEAK...ENGLISH!?”

My mentor would then stop and remind his students, “Don’t be bad Americans, learn the language.” When our students do not respond to instructions to “just write,” we might as well be speaking a foreign language. They are not incapable of writing, and it is not that they do not understand what writing consists of, and this certainly has nothing to do with their intelligence. What we have failed to recognize is that the rhetorical patterns that each of our students brings to the classroom is different, and utilizing one method to engage all of our students is completely dismissive of that difference. As Powell reminds us, rhetoric is a “system of discourse through which meaning was, is, and continues to be made in a given culture” (“Octalog III...” 123). Powell’s definition is particularly interesting because it forces us to acknowledge that rhetorical patterns are consistently being redrawn and revised, and that these are dependent on the cultural background of the individual using them.

Our pedagogies and curriculum must recognize that the diversity within the writing classroom must change how we construct our classes, how we create reading lists and writing assignments, how we run the classroom, and how we assess their writing. Recognizing that many of the practices within the writing classroom are based on imperialist and colonizing traditions, we need to assert a decolonial approach to the writing process. Our students are not all white male able-bodied, upper class, and Christian, and our pedagogies should not treat them as if they are. Recognizing the writing process—not the writing product—as a performance that utilizes particular

rhetorical maneuvers is one way to engage a decolonial approach, a way to counter the production of text that is increasingly expected to resemble a production and assembly line. That's counterproductive. What we have not recognized is that we are asking our students to perform. Driskill says: "Performance reminds us that writing is only one way to engage the world, make meaning, and build arguments. Embodied rhetorics are just as important to most people's lives—if not more so—than written texts" (195-96).

Responding to Driskill's assertion, I argue that in the writing classroom we must consider that asking our students to write is a more complex performance than the writing process implies. As the example of the story of my grandfather illustrates above, these stories inform me and tell me who I am. But these stories offer more than a creative outlet. These stories validate my presence. These stories remind me of where my people come from and tie me to a particular land that I will always call home. These stories remind me that despite the privilege I've been given to be in the university that I come from a long line of hardworking and humble people. These stories remind me of the intense journey my family has traveled and continue to travel. My grandfather's story becomes my performance when I become the storyteller.

Additionally, as Driskill asserts "[p]erformance rhetorics can be defined as any discourse that uses embodied performance as its central modality" (24). Storytelling as a performance inherently acknowledges the rhetorical patterns, allows the transmittal of information that tie individuals to land bases and spaces, and utilizes the body in both the delivery and the performative function. J.L. Austin explains that "a *performative*...refers to cases in which 'the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action'" (my italics; qtd. in Taylor 5). The story, as my example above illustrates, is a

product. It exists. It can be archived. The performance of the story, its storytelling capacity cannot occur without me. It needs the body for it to be a performance. This is particular useful in the writing classroom, in an increasingly diverse classroom. At institutions where students of color are not only highly visible and very much the minority, their presence inside this space challenges the demographics of the university and the writing classroom. And within our classes students of color are cognizant, though often silenced, by the same racialized discourse of such an institution. Students of color might be highly visible for political reasons, but their presence and their needs are rarely addressed. Utilizing storytelling as a performance rhetorical practice gets them to make their stand, to have their stories heard, and to reject becoming another brown face in the room. Storytelling forces other students to see the storyteller as a person.

Thus, within the writing classroom and the writing process, these stories initiate the process of both developing my voice and establishing my sense of ownership over my stories and my body. Stephanie Wheeler argues:

We need to consider what would happen if we think about writing as an embodied practice and about the written text as shaped by the particular circumstances of the bodies that produce and interpret it. Forgetting these bodies and these processes of writing is to erase the stories and meanings that are inscribed on the body and to take away the developing voice of our students. (8)

When we construct our curriculum from one specific cultural center, we fail to acknowledge that the rhetorical patterns students bring into the classroom affect and

alter our curriculum. We fail to acknowledge that besides their cultural understandings and multiplicities, their bodies change the classroom. We will never have an entirely straight white male able-bodied classroom, and we should remember this when we construct our classes. We need to be proactive and respond to the needs of our students.

Utilizing stories within the classroom is a decolonial practice. But this does not mean simply bringing literature into the classroom, but recognizing the intersections of the poetic and the rhetorical to engage, create space, and respond to our students. I utilize the personal narrative at the start of my classes. Using Thomas King's *The Truth About to Stories* as a theoretical basis, in addition to other writings, I ask students to interrogate the sources of the stories that construct this nation, the power bestowed on such stories, and the authority of the storytellers. But then I have my students recall a personal story of their own and deliver it to the class. The only requirements of the story is that it has to be theirs, it has to be real, and it has to teach them or provide them with some information about who they are, where they came from, and/or some information about their respective families. I do not set any parameters on how the story has to be constructed because I do not want a set product. I do not want to standardize the story. I want the story itself to guide them. I provide an example by telling a story of my own, similar to the one provided earlier, that I deliver to the class.

The delivery of the personal story establishes a couple of concepts. Primarily, it gives the students a sense of power and control over their stories. The delivery of their stories is empowering. Students often relate familial stories of hardship, traveling, and/or of a specific occurrence. Similar to my example above, my students bring stories into the classroom that places them and their ancestors in a particular place and time.

Instead of having a wide sweeping historical narrative that tends to displace and forget the bodies and the lands, the students' stories take control of that history, place themselves within that history, and it debunks the capacity of one grand universalizing narrative. Secondly, this sense of authority over their stories seeps into their sense of identity within the classroom. They are no longer one of the many faces in the classroom, but they recognize themselves as bodies with stories and with voices. Thirdly, the sharing of these stories allows the initiation of the process of community building within the classroom. Because students begin to see each other as individuals, as persons with families, relationships, memories, and stories, they are more willing to confront difficult or controversial topics within the classroom while being rather mindful of their words and actions. They become aware of their audiences and respond accordingly. And lastly, this process affects their understanding of the audiences that they respond to in their writing and other projects from within and beyond the classroom. Students are made to recognize that every-*body* has story. And what we say, write, and do have real consequences. As such, it becomes a little bit easier for students to envision their audiences and their audiences' needs and expectations.

The pedagogical implications of bringing together works of literatures and rhetorics into the writing classroom will dramatically impact student's relationship to writing, storytelling, and meaning making. In an interview with Laura Coltelli, Wendy Rose argues against the creation of poetry that is so complex and abstract that it requires a course that will teach students how to read it. She instead argues for the creation of poetry that is easily attainable to the vast majority of readers because the idea is not for readers to get trapped in the reading of a text and it is not to keep a particular set of

information for only a select few, but that the information, the story is available to all. In addition, Rose's argument teaches students that their own means of communication and storytelling are valid and real without having to resemble or sound like someone else. Using literatures and rhetorics in the writing classroom will not only empower students to tell their own stories and to build their own arguments, but will also validate their narratives. Powell says that while we do not have to believe in the same things, we do have to respect one another ("Down by the River..." 42). If students can learn to communicate their own narrative and can recognize the power of writing, then there is a greater chance that they can respect the work of others. In this way, we can create cross-cultural alliances within our students and in the long run this has a very real capacity to change the world we share.

Conclusion

The disciplinary implications of crossing borders and building interdisciplinary alliances in the writing classroom and in our scholarship challenge the construction of knowledges and/or accessibility of information. And while throughout this dissertation I acknowledge that some borders must be challenged and disputed, other borders are actually necessary and must continue. The fact remains that colonization has a history of breaking and defying borders, of taking military occupation of borders, disrupting and destroying treaties, trampling over peoples and laws and lands. These borders are necessary. The same can be said about the crossing of some borders within literature and rhetoric. There's no *one* methodology for how to do this and/or when to avoid this. But we can agree that recognizing the original institution of some divisions is necessary in

order to decipher whether or not we should challenge them. For example, Indigenous scholars have argued for the use of Indigenous theory instead of Western theory to utilize on works by Indigenous peoples. This is a significant border that needs to continue. However, the construction of curriculum with a hyper emphasis on Western theory and/or following the Greco-Roman tradition while the closing off of works by women and people of color into separate subgroups is a problem that needs to be addressed and challenged.

But the building of interdisciplinary and cross-cultural alliances does have the capacity to make for stronger more unified departments. It can set the pace for decolonizing our disciplines and allowing these shifts to expand beyond our fields. While the works by people of color within literature and rhetoric are consistently marginalized, an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural alliance suggests we do not have to limit the conversation. When we have allies in different disciplines, we have the capacity to open our scholarship and our discourse in recognition of the multiple ways that people of color move and shift through discourse, history, politics, and our disciplines within the rhetorics and poetics in convergent and divergent paths. It recognizes how we can come together and how we can be driven apart. This does not mean we begin essentializing oppressions or create a hierarchy of oppressions. We all have our stories. But we can certainly allow the stories to communicate. In fact, we must utilize that unspoken story between the stories to speak to us, or we must learn to hear the discussion in play. Because as allies we need to find the ways to help each other, to build communities in unwelcoming spaces, to work together to change a system of domination, and to stand up for one another. There is a real and urgent need for these

alliances. Our scholarship and our place within academia are dependent on these alliances. Our mutual survival beyond academia is counting on these alliances.

But in our engagement of a discourse of alliance, an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural alliance, we must be cognizant of the boundaries we are crossing and do so delicately and ethically. We must be careful not to misappropriate and speak on the behalf of others. We must do ethical research. We must truly understand what a story is saying and recognize the rhetorical maneuvers a writer engages. We need to hear the stories and hear the conversations between stories. It is within that space that we can begin to see how the alliances are drawn, how we can cross borders, and how to keep borders. Doing so opens our disciplines to critically engage a whole body of work that has yet to be heard or fully understood. But it is also within this space that we can begin to weave alliances that are based on commonalities and respect. It is within this space that we can begin to weave alliances that will dismantle the master's house, because the tools to build these alliances are not the master's. The tools are our own. They are culturally and locally based. They are the discourses of our homes, of our kitchens, of our bodies, of our tongues, of the songs we hear in our sleep, of the movement of our bodies to the beat of a drum, of the land and dirt and smells that make everything okay, of the private, of the "mundane," of our rage, passion, and hate, of the heat in our bodies, and of the loves in our lives and the loves we have lost and never forget: it is the discourse we have always utilized to survive.

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